# worldFILMnews

## AND TELEVISION PROGRESS

VOL. 1 NO. 2 INCORPORATING CINEMA QUARTERLY MONTHLY

6d.

MAY 1936

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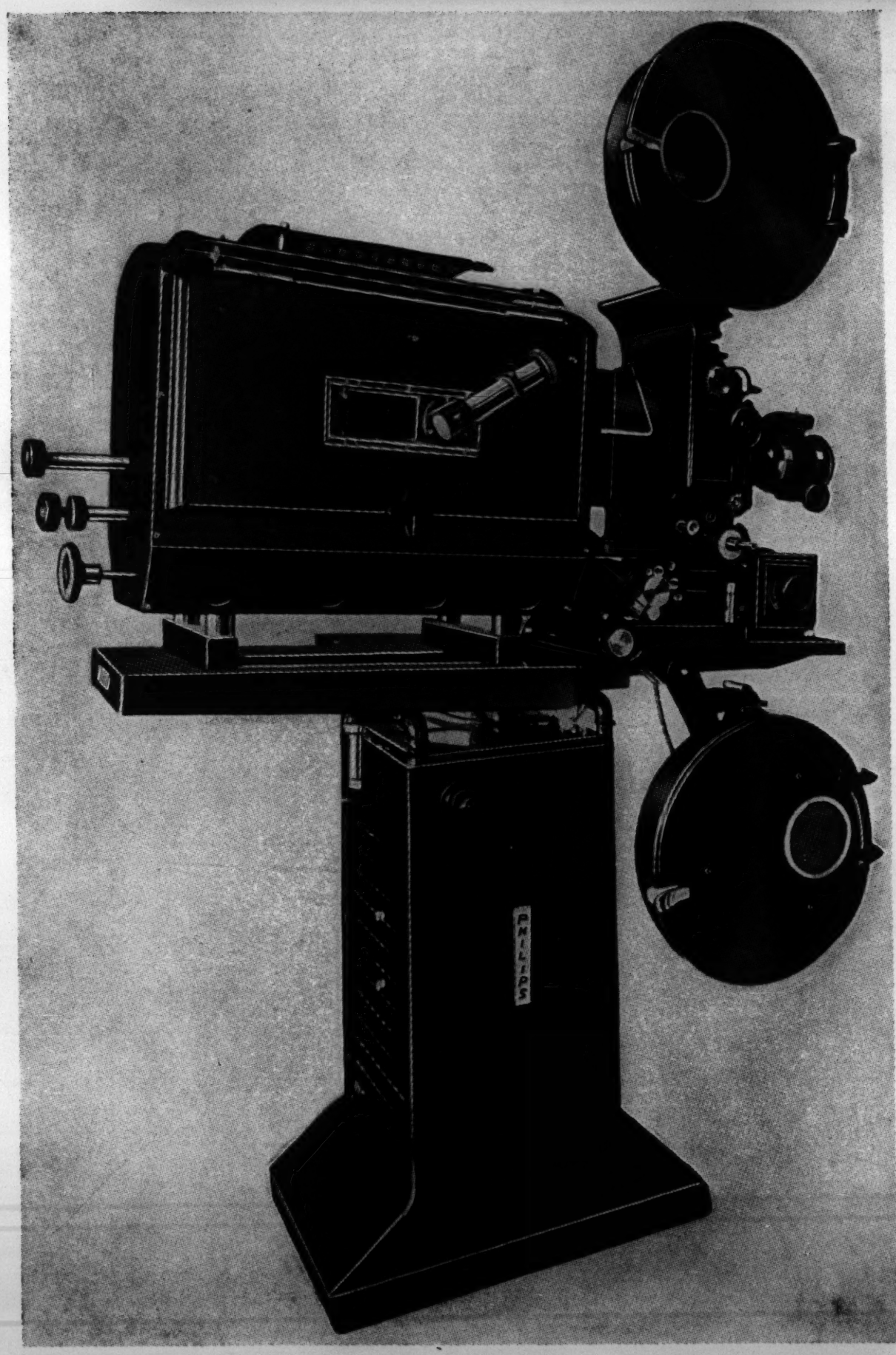
THE HUMAN VOICE

## HITCH BY HITCHCOCK

## HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN, RENÉ CLAIR?

## CHURCHES VULGARISE THE GOSPEL

# PHILIPS

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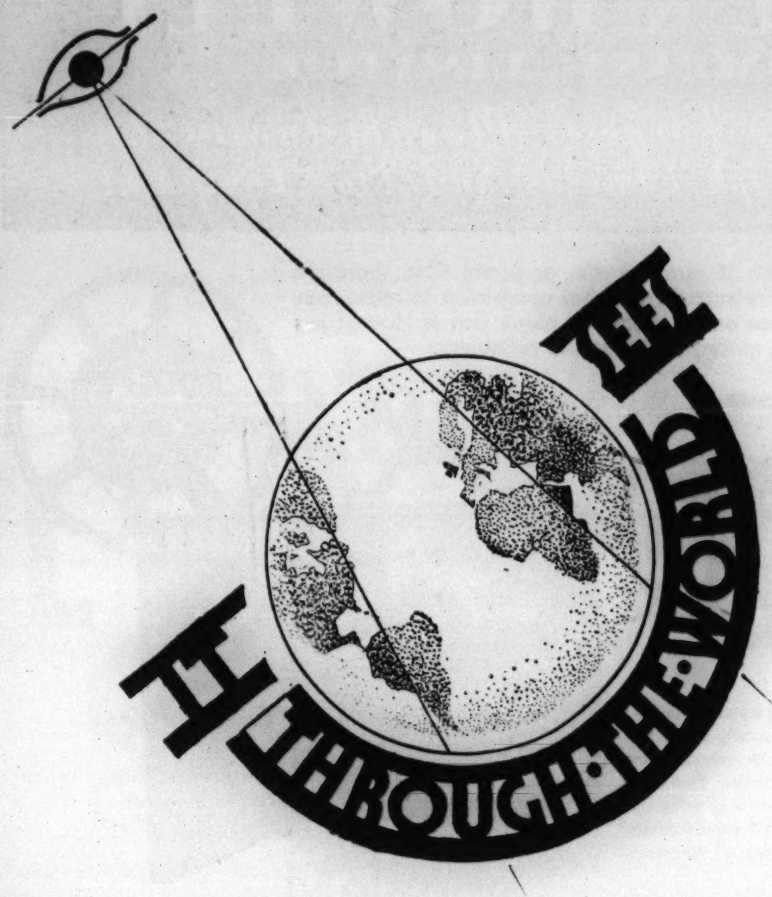


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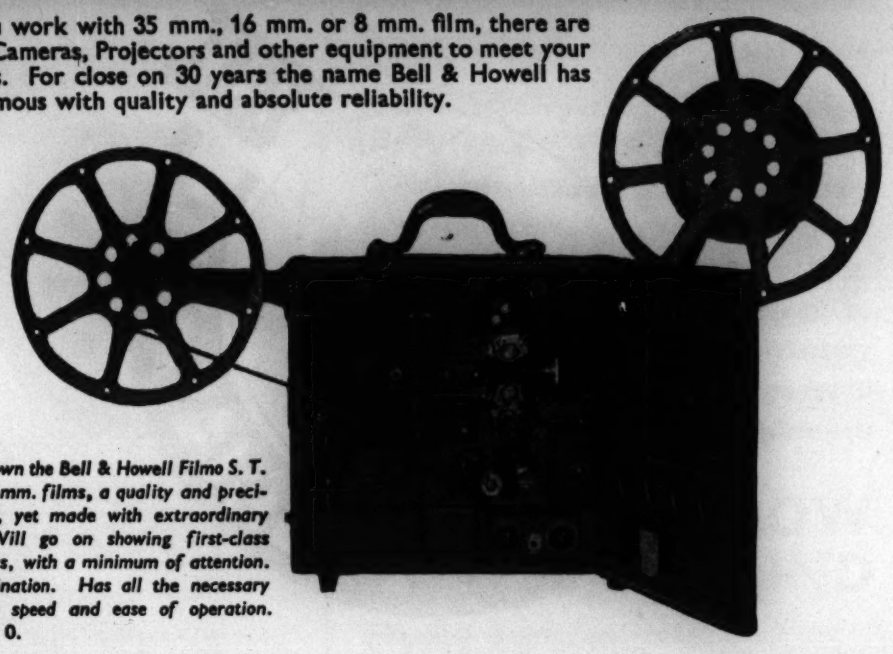

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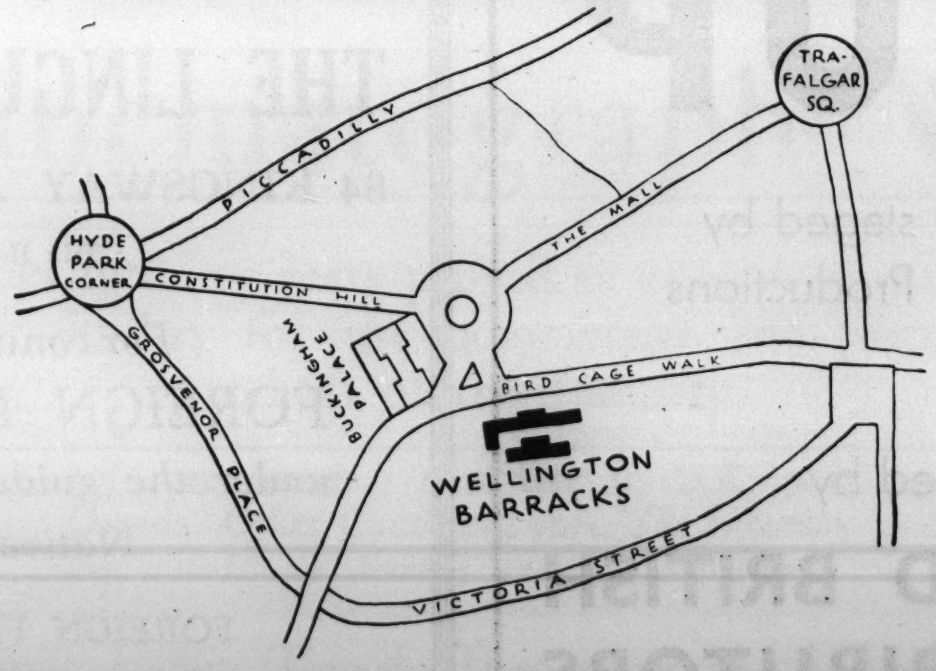



# YOU CAN BE SURE OF SHELL

# world FILM news

AND TELEVISION PROGRESS

(INCORPORATING CINEMA QUARTERLY)

SECOND NUMBER Editor H. N. FELD. Associate Editor NORMAN WILSON. MAY 1936


# HITCHCOCK, THE MAN KORDA CANNOT SIGN

## Says C. A. LEJEUNE

**Alfred Hitchcock is Public Monument No. 1 of the British film industry. Visiting Americans demand to see him in the same breath with which they ask for St. Paul's Cathedral and the lawns at Oxford. They are always surprised—who wouldn't be? —with what they see.**

**Hitch is a vast mountain of a man in the late thirties, with snapping black eyes, a ruddy face, and a child's lower lip above a quantity of chins.**

**His nose is good, but you don't notice it. His hand is enormous, and engulfs yours when you shake it. He dresses mostly in black, and his face persistently wears an expression either sleekly malicious or faintly surprised.**

**Everybody likes Hitch. His heart is as large as his person. He is prodigiously generous, never forgets an old employee, and anyone can impose on him with a hard-luck story. When you eat with Hitch, you eat like a prince and drink like an emperor. He'll say, "What about a meal, kid?" and take you to the most refined and expensive restaurant in London. But he'll always go, if you'll let him, in his oldest clothes.**

He has a tiny wife, who writes his scenarios, and a tiny, fairy-like daughter, who bobs an old-fashioned curtsey to you when you meet her. These two small persons rule his life.

### Loves Melodrama

He loves music, mystery and melodrama. He likes to imagine all the people he knows in melodramatic situations. He gloats over the idea of an aeroplane dropping live bombs on the Aldershot Tattoo. Like the children in *The Brushwood Boy*, he "sets light to populous cities to see how they would burn."

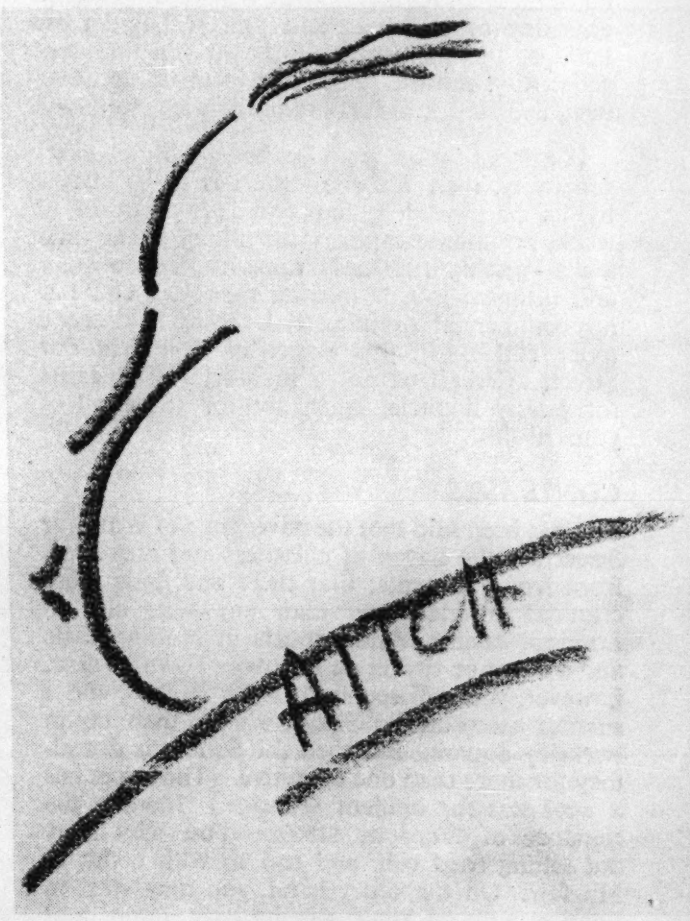
On the set he's a sadist. He revels in spiritual de-bagging. Nothing delights him more than to take a film star with a good opinion of himself, work him until he sweats, and then publicly can the sequence. His language is fierce, and his humour rarely drawing-room. He respects nobody's feelings; but everybody respects him.

Hitch's genius is for draughtsmanship. He is an instinctive visualiser. His film scripts are minor works of art, every shot blocked on the margin of the page in rough design. When a script is finished, he loses interest in the picture. He would rather get on with the next job. The present one is already projected in his mind's eye.

When he talks to you, his broad, soft pencil sneaks out and sketches illustrations on the menu card or tablecloth. The underlining of his signature slips into a self-portrait, rudely revelatory. He can forge your signature in a moment, so that you wouldn't know it from your own.

He began his film career by designing titles—painting "Came the Dawn" in white letters on a black ground, or "One Week Later" in black letters on a white ground, with appropriate illustrative symbols. In twelve years he has made more good pictures than any other director in this country—and he looks like continuing to make them.

His favourite star is Jimmy Cagney, his favourite film *Eight Girls in a Boat*, and he is probably the only man left in England whom Korda wants, but can't persuade to sign on the dotted line.




HITCH by HITCH

# POLICE USE CINE-CAMERA TO CONVICT SPEEDSTERS

**The Chesterfield police are trying to obtain evidence against dangerous drivers by securing records on moving film.**

**They have mounted a 16-mm. camera in the front seat of one of their mobile cars. It is operated by a man sitting beside the driver, who shoots through the wind-screen of the car. When the hood of the car is up the camera is almost invisible.**

The experiment was started in July last year, when films were used to convict street bookmakers. The pictures, screened in court, showed bets actually being received by the bookies.

Scotland Yard, when asked if they were doing anything along similar lines, said they had considered the idea but discarded it as impractical.

There certainly would appear to be many technical snags. If the police-car is travelling at high speed, the vibration would almost certainly reduce the picture to a blur. And who will cheek the camera speed? The most innocuous driving looks dangerous when the camera is turning slow!

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# THE BRITISH FILM

## Wardour Street From Within

**By One of the TWO CHAIRMEN.**

**A puzzling commission for a first contribution to "W.F.N."**

**Rather reminiscent of those mysterious safaris which set out from Northumberland Avenue in the dusker hours, bound for "Chinatown and London's Underworld." Wardour Street, after all, is a one-way street. All the traffic moves in the same direction, towards the half-yearly dividend.**

There is nothing very mysterious about Wardour Street from inside. All the mystery is imposed from outside. Nothing unless it be its myths. It is said to be vulgar, amoral, illiterate, otiose, ostentatious, arrogant. It is all of these things and none. Walk the Street on any day of the year and you will find these failings, and in plenty. But you will find, too, generosity, culture, sensibility, modesty, creativeness, aye, and a disturbing puritanism, to boot.

If an institution is to be known by an exact generality, then Wardour Street is to be known by its hard-headed, harder-hided devotion to work, an infinite capacity for taking pains—and kicks—getting ruthlessly on with the constant and ultimate job of making money. There is no commercial or industrial centre in Europe more ruthless in this objective. But Wardour Street, after all, is not a sanatorium. It exists for purely financial ends, not for the good of your health.

### CONTRASTS

It has been said that the pavements of Wardour Street are the haven of chisellers and racketeers from five continents; that there one finds more criminal countenances than anywhere else in London, saving certain courts in Notting Dale and a street or two in de Beauvoir Town. There, however, you will see more Rolls Royces, and a smarter sheen on the chauffeur's cap than any in Berkeley Square. But then the Square is dormitory for more than one executive. (The Street has a weakness for opulent verbiage.) *There* is the romance of Wardour Street. You may start out selling fried fish, and end up with a flat in Mayfair. On the other hand, you may start in London with an apartment in Park Lane, and end up snatching small Haigs in the public bar.

But though you may forget the elementary days of bread and cheese and a bitter at the "Two Chairmen," and currently dally with a *filet mignon* in the Grill of Grills, you need never forsake that back-slapping, one-man patter act which, though it may slightly shudder the susceptibilities of the Marquis at the window table, registers you as a personality.

With its old-world charm, Wardour Street still retains a good fellow or two, who, though he may call you a flamboyant when he means a philanderer, asks you if you'll "poysson" as well as "zupp." But it has patricians who ride with the Quorn, and who will give a duffer a well-paid job because he still plays for his county. Among its Moguls are, a man who auctioned china at a seaside salon, another who once ran an old clothing store, a third who sold newspapers. Its lesser lights include a first-class club three-quarter, a county cricketer, a 'Varsity rowing blue, and a member of the Ocean Yacht Club.

Is there any street in Europe which smokes more cigars than Wardour Street? Between the "Duke of Wellington" and the "Canadian," the Corona or the Perla de Oceano is the cachet of authenticity. More than one salesman has been known to go luncheonless in order to flaunt that essential emblem. There is one noted personality who secretes dozens on his person with the brilliance of a prestidigitateur, and produces them to the initiated with equal polish.

Is there any community which can on Monday lean against a saloon-bar with plebeian ease, and on Tuesday play host at a Caviare d'Astrakhan and Pol Roger '98 occasion? Nowhere, from Kobe Quayside to Sunset Boulevard, does the two-timer and the side-issue man get away with what he gets away in Wardour Street. Nowhere does he persuade with such success High Society to grace his baptismal functions.

Vulgarity, ostentation? There are offices in Wardour Street where the chromium-plating and dressed leather would shame Half Moon Street, where mosaic tables in reception lobbies remind you of the Vatican, where the personal secretary wears Schiaparelli creations, and the boss sports a Lincoln Bennett hat.

### STRANGER THAN FICTION

Amorality? Then I commend you the British Board of Film Censors, than whom there is no more righteous and highly principled body of ladies and gentlemen in captivity. It has been said that the only reason why no paper has ever published photographs of the B.B.F.C. personnel is that nobody would believe it.

But then nobody would believe the truth about Wardour Street. It would be too disillusioning. For truth, even in Wardour Street is a stranger to fiction.

Wardour Street from within?
I wouldn't dare!
You wouldn't believe it.
Nor would Wardour Street.

## 25,000 PEOPLE VISIT MOBILE NEWS CINEMA

Posters in the corridors of two L.N.E.R. trains, King's Cross-Leeds and Leeds-Edinburgh, offer film entertainment to passengers. The price of admission is no higher than ordinary news theatres—an hour to an hour and a quarter for a shilling.

The long and narrow van, taking its shape from that of the train, is reminiscent of the early nickelodeons. About 50 people can be seated, and the film is shown by back projection on to a small screen, 6 ft. × 7 ft.

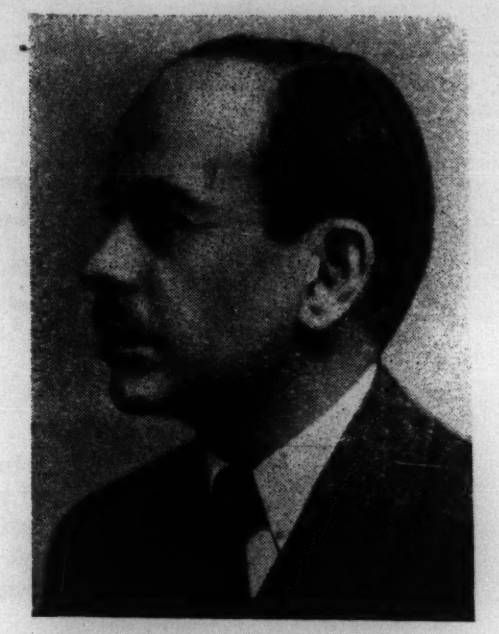
The programme, consisting of Pathé newsreel items, one-reeler interest films, and comedy shorts, is changed every week.

An L.N.E.R. cinema official told *W.F.N.* that the travelling public is enthusiastic. 25,000 people have already visited the film shows since they started on May 27th last year. The best proof of success is that a regular public has been created.

The same official keeps a diary in which he enters the public's reaction to each programme. From this he has found "the perfect programme," a cartoon, a comedy, a newsreel and, particularly popular, a travel film.

Encouraged by success, the L.N.E.R. already contemplates building more mobile news cinemas.

## What Opportunity is Given to Young Scenario Writers?



**Max Schach of Capitol Films answers this—**

In my opinion the question touches upon one of the important points—I should even like to say one of the weaknesses—from which the young British film industry is still suffering. It is not that there is a dearth in this country of young script writers, rich in ideas and the constructive faculty, but they often lack the "shooting script technique," which is the advantage, though not the monopoly, of Hollywood.

Capitol Films has drawn its practical conclusions from this fact; none of the American script writers whom we have brought over works without a British writer.

We have now three talented young Englishmen on our scenario staff, Ernest Betts, Roger d'Est Burford and Denis Waldock, and experience has shown that these gifted writers learn very quickly from their American colleagues. In a short time we shall, doubtless, raise a body of British scenario writers who, at present, in most cases lack nothing except encouragement.

There will, of course, always be exceptions; for instance, outstanding American script writers will always be necessary for any special type of subject, as everything that is outstanding must be sought by an aspiring film industry.

On the other hand, I am convinced that such outstanding personalities can also be found and developed within the younger generation of British script writers.

# PIONEER NEWS-REEL THEATRE IS SHOPWINDOW FOR THE REALISTS

*By ANDREW BROOM*

**The Gaumont British Picture Corporation decided in 1931 to change the name and policy of the Super Cinema, Charing Cross Road. A. W. Jarratt conceived the idea of a theatre devoted entirely to magazine films, and thus was launched the policy now associated with the Tatler Theatre, Charing Cross Road.**

**It opened on Monday, February 16th, 1931, with a programme consisting of a news-reel, magazine, cartoon and a two-reel interest. Almost immediately this new type of cinema entertainment attracted people with time to spare, as well as those interested in the cinema. Contact was quickly made with colleges, schools and educational bodies, and arrangements made for parties of students to view certain films during study hours. Thus the foundations were laid.**

For a year the Gaumont-British Movietone News Theatre in Shaftesbury Avenue and the Tatler were the two solitary theatres of their type in the British Isles. So successful was this new departure in film theatres that they were imitated. Before long, news theatres were opened in the West End, at the principal railway termini, and in the larger provincial towns.

Those responsible for the booking of the weekly programmes at the Tatler learned much from experience. They very soon realised that six or seven single reels of various subjects was the programme preferred. Towards the end of 1931, films produced by the E.M.B. were played, and it was noticed that the audience, especially the younger members, followed the technique of the Grierson Group very closely. Observations as to photography, cutting, editing and subject-matter were heard frequently, which proved conclusively that documentary film was being understood and appreciated.

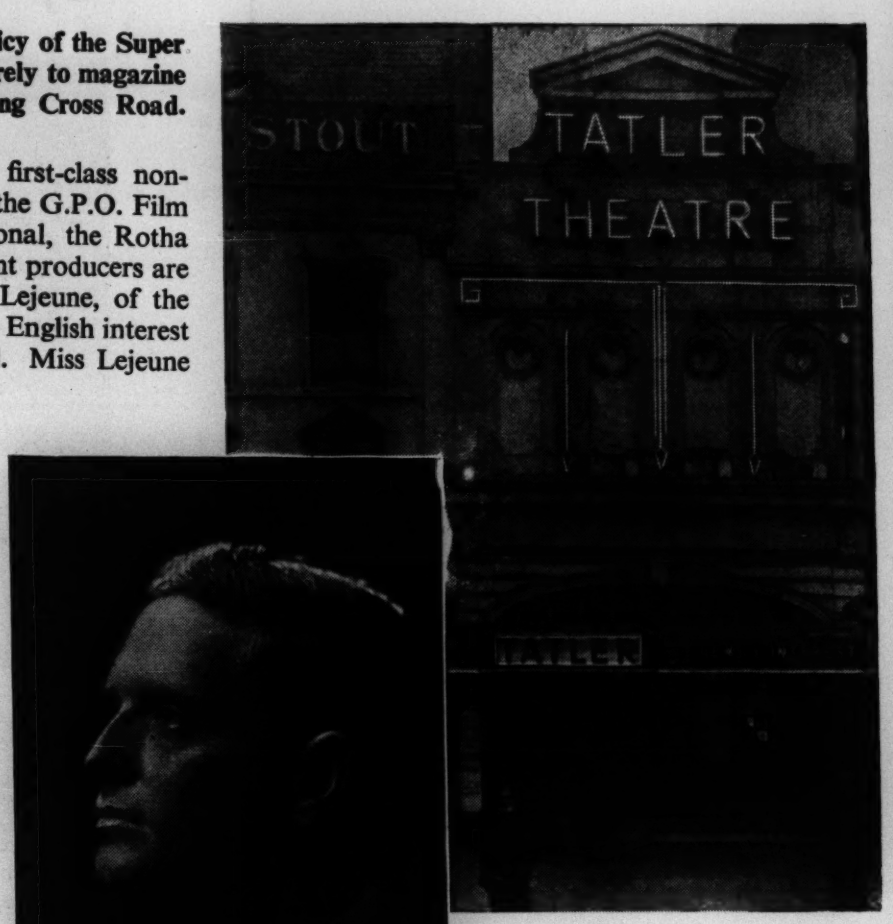
### Propaganda Resented

The Tatler was the first cinema to exhibit an all-Disney programme. Christmas, 1933, saw this departure from the original policy. Mrs. A. W. Jarratt suggested a complete programme of *Mickey Mouse* and *Silly Symphony* cartoons. The first Disney season was an unqualified success, and continued for several weeks. It attracted enormous crowds of young people who were visiting their first cinema.

A well-known film magazine introduced into the subject-matter some unobtrusive advertising. It was done with the utmost discretion, but it was detected, and there were complaints. Advertising films should not be included in a news-theatre programme. Another pitfall is propaganda. Patrons openly resent it. It is extraordinary how quickly people imagine they are listening to propaganda. Immediately a sequence about the U.S.S.R. flashes on the screen, it is the signal for exclamations, either for or against the Soviet Union.

The reception given *The March of Time* was most encouraging. The first issue of this virile news-reel created the greatest interest, and each subsequent issue continues to do so. There has been criticism as to the very definite American atmosphere of *The March of Time*, but this objection will be obviated as soon as English sequences are regularly included in each issue.

Those responsible for the booking of films are not finding the position difficult, because there is an ever-increasing supply of first-class non-fictional shorts. Such groups as the G.P.O. Film Unit, Gaumont-British Instructional, the Rotha Unit, and many other independent producers are all giving of their best. C. A. Lejeune, of the *Observer*, once remarked that the English interest films were the best in the world. Miss Lejeune never spoke a truer word.




*The place where many film experiments have made their bow to the public.*

*Andrew Broom, manager of the Tatler Theatre since its inception.*

*Mr. Broom, together with A. W. Jarratt, has kept the Tatler programme of constant interest for five years.*

# CANADA DRAWS ON OLD RECORDS FOR MOST DRAMATIC PICTURE OF WAR

**The most dramatic history of the war yet made has just come into the country, and from the least expected quarter. Canada, which is best known for its short picturesque films of Canadian scenery and sport, has made its second full-length feature.**

The first was made some years ago by Bruce Bairnsfather in the studios owned by the Ontario Government. It was called, as might be expected, *The Better 'Ole*, but little was heard of it after production. It fell between the period of silence and sound, and was in fact a dull film.

This history of the war is a large-scale dramatisation of the war, built up mainly from the world's news-reels, and concentrating on the Canadian contribution. Directed by Frank Badgley, Canadian Government film-producer, it builds a spectacular and terrifying picture of mass marching and mass murder.

Columbia Pictures handled the film in America, and in Canada it had an astounding commercial success. Coming at a time when war is again in the public mind, and when a review of the Great War comes close to the general conscience, its circulation in this country should be equally interesting.

The film includes the principal battles of the War, drawing for its main material on actual battlefield records. Its massed reality comes nearer to fantasy and fairy tale than anything in *Things to Come*.

The capsizing of the *Blucher* at Jutland, with its hundreds of men slipping desperately over the turning hull and falling like flies to their death, is the high spot of the picture. It is easily the most striking thing the camera has ever recorded. With the mud and the marching, death by wire and gas and shrapnel and bomb, the superb chapters of this film build up to a tragedy so great that the inventive efforts of the studios seem pale in comparison.

## MEETINGS AND ACQUAINTANCES

**FLORA ROBSON,** formerly co-lead with Robert Donat at the Festival Theatre, Cambridge, represents the contribution of the *avant-garde* stage to British screen-acting. She is to play Queen Elizabeth in the Korda-Bruckner film scheduled to take the floor at Denham in May. Pommer will produce.

Flora Robson cares more about who photographs her than who directs her. Still a little scared of the technical demands of movies, she expects sympathy from the camera department. Some skilful tests by Harold Rosson made her feel that her cameraman can make or break her.

Her inferiority-complex regarding her own rushes might well set an example to all honest directors.

**THE BROTHERS WILHELM.** Hans, the elder, has returned from Hollywood. He wants to script Margaret Kennedy's *Week End.*

Wolfgang, the younger, is trimming up another script for British production—this time from an original story.

Both believe that there are some film subjects outside the past, the future, the exotic, and the music-hall.

**ADRIAN BRUNEL,** celebrated director of English silents, has just completed a new text-book on film production, with an introduction by Alexander Korda. This "sequel" to his popular *Filmcraft* will be issued by George Newnes Ltd. this month.

Brunel is now recuperating after three years of making feature-length pictures at the rate of one every two months. He claims that he has learned much from the experience—particularly never to do it again.

**CHARLES DUFF** is a great authority on Spanish and Portuguese literature. His new book, *The Truth about Columbus,* bids fair to be regarded as the most accurate of the few honest works ever written about the great explorer.

A new light on Columbus' adventure in Spain is cast by the chapters dealing with the important part played therein by the Jews.

Negotiations for a film based on the book are in progress. The Jews may doubtless be relied upon to play another important part.

**ANDRÉ GIRARD,** French poster artist, is holding a successful exhibition of paintings in Paris.

Like Zero (whose poster ideas have been discussed in the first issue), Girard believes that the film poster serves no useful purpose. He thinks that the appeal of the printed poster, in general, is decreasing. He wants to see a single original canvas take the place of its ubiquitous copies. This idea he carried out in a series of immense oils of foreign cities for a "Hear the World" Marconi radio campaign. The original pictures, erected on the usual poster hoardings, caused a sensation in the streets of Paris. A cosmetic firm followed up with a "types of female beauty" series by Van Dongan.

**LORD BERNERS** engages in three different spheres of art; painting, literature and music. His works delight a chosen circle of London admirers.

In Paris the Vicomte de Noailles and the Comte de Beaumont have both turned producer. Their films are, in a sense, epoch-making since they include Cocteau's *Le Sang d'un Poète,* Man Ray's *Le Château du Dé,* and Bunuel's *L'âge d'Or.*

Why has Lord Berners not yet tackled the cinema? Will the aristocratic tradition prove stronger in Paris than London?

**WALTHER RILLA,** German stage and screen star, reports the completion in Berlin of *Autumn Melody.* Rilla is equally happy acting in German, French or English, and has played lead in *The Scarlet Pimpernel.*

On the Continent he has served the independent producers and the more high-brow film public.

**JEAN GIONO,** famous French writer, has at last seen the film versions of two of his most celebrated novels, *Angèle* and *Joffroy.* The latter has been shown to the London Film Society. Marcel Pagnol, playwright turned producer, made both films. The Giono-Pagnol collaboration did not last in spite of a box-office success rare in the French cinema to-day. Pagnol conceives of cinema as a steady succession of dialogue scenes; Giono expects bigger things of it.

Cavalcanti and Ruttmann both proposed collaborating with Giono before the Pagnol tie-up, but French producers were not interested.

Will Giono prove strong enough in future to dictate his own choice of partners to his producers?

# MY FUTURE PLANS

## By Victor Saville

I am working as a producer within the Denham organisation, and as such have become an independent unit with certain films which I shall produce, and in some cases direct, for world release through London Films usual source, the United Artists. I hope to bring forward new directorial talent to help me in this programme, and because of my desire to encourage such talent, it will be necessary at first to direct myself, but I have hopes, with certain directors or near-directors, of making, eventually, no less than four pictures a year.

We have purchased the rights in *Storm in a Teacup,* Bruno Frank's play adapted by James Bridie, which will probably be the first picture of the new unit, starting some time in May or June. We have also purchased the Winifred Holtby novel, *South Riding,* of which I have great hopes. The other subject which we are working on is an adaptation from a sketch written many years ago, called *Gentlemen, the King!*" which is a military story, and which we are planning to do in Technicolor.

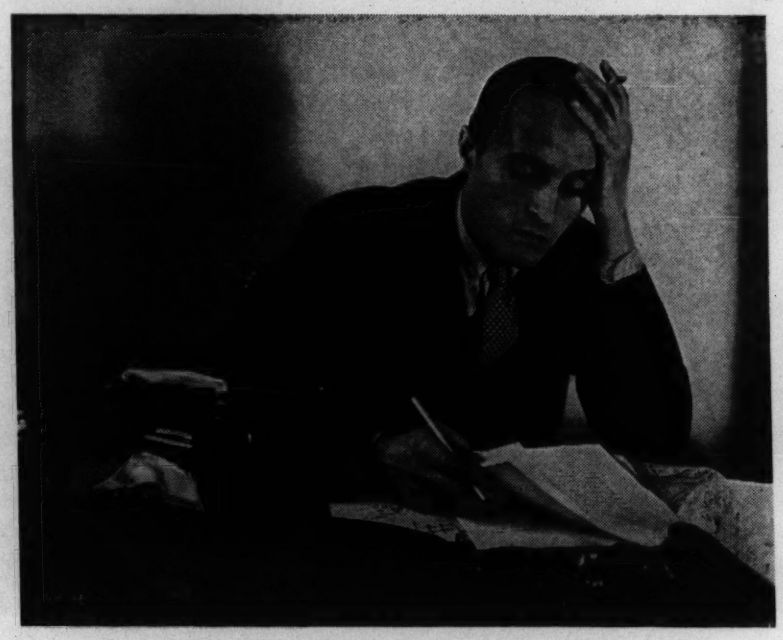
Maurice Chevalier and Betty Stockfield in a scene from "The Beloved Vagabond," the forthcoming Toeplitz production, directed by Kurt Bernhardt.

# HAS RENÉ CLAIR FORGOTTEN?

## *asks André Bouxin*

**Abandoning for a while his legendary reserve, René Clair the other day donned his best clothes and, between Charles Laughton's superb moustache and the sardonic smile of Saint Denis, the director of the Compagnie des Quinze, he talked for thirty-five minutes before a brilliant Franco-English audience. The lecture hall of the Institut Français, which only holds 800 people, was forced to accommodate 1,000 listeners, who, unwilling to miss such a rare opportunity, had fought to get in.**

**Rêné Clair used the opportunity to give vent to his feelings, his bitterness at having fought so long in vain.**



Here are a few of his words:

"The public knows nothing of the cinema, and does not sufficiently realise the tremendous efforts of the artisans of the film and the possibilities of the cinema, duped as it constantly is by the crude publicity of the exploiters of the screen. The cinema of to-day borrows from the stage, from the novel, from the plastic arts, and consequently it cannot be said to be itself an art. For my part, I should like to be able to say that it is an art, and nothing but an art. But the cinema is, above all, a means of expression, which in spite of the television of to-morrow, will go down to history as the first means of expression destined for the masses.

**A Sigh for Silent Films**

"Since 1908 the cinema has stopped seeking its own direction, and has been subordinated to the producers, who being, above all, business men, inflicted on the public a host of artistic pretensions.

"The spoken word only emphasised this servitude, and destroyed that creative spirit which it had somehow kept alive by condemning it to imitation.

**"As far as I am concerned, I have long since made up my mind: I can only regret the happy times of the silent films, which shrouded productions in an atmosphere of poetry which speech has destroyed.**

**"As for the theatre, towards which I am not in the least hostile, I shall be very forthright.**

"The stage and film have nothing to gain by being intermingled. The stage actor, by repeating his part every night, improves it constantly. The film actor, on the other hand, must in a few minutes create an image which is reproduced everywhere, and will never be obliterated. The film actor owes more to spontaneity than to experience.

"To-day the cinema clings desperately to moth-eaten dogmas. A beginner in the studio could not start as Charlie Chaplin did in the olden days, for the screen of to-day represents the most perfect defence organisation against the very thing which might revive it.

"Charlie Chaplin winds up a career of genius in an anachronistic way. The film of yesterday was hampered in its development. The film of to-day leaves no mark on the white screen.

"The field is clear for the film of to-morrow."

Well, this time René Clair has spoken, but he has said too much or not enough. He has said too much because he spoke before a public which had come to see him, which was expecting anything; anything but this pessimism, this mood of despair. That public was not likely, in fact, to realise the significance of those invectives.

**Failing Brilliantly**

My dear René Clair, we are all agreed that the cinema has too long been a victim of the profiteers, and production in general is far from being what it should. But when I saw you the first time, you remember, it was at your first showing of 14 *juillet*. I told you then quite frankly my surprise at your first failure. I tried to find excuses, and you said to me just as you said to-day: "It is the fault of the producers, who are only interested in the financial returns."

You wanted to leave Tobis to go to America, there to find virgin soil to develop your art in an atmosphere of freedom.

Then after a long silence I found you again in your *Dernier Milliardaire*. I was happy to see the man who made *l'Entracte*, but alas, your plot was the story of the "*salon des échanges*," played out two years too late.

I waited for a victorious reappearance. You produced *The Ghost Goes West*. In my opinion, this, too, is bad.

Well, it is true, no doubt, producers are exploiters, oppressors, and a misinformed public paralyses production. But you are certainly not blameless either.

The cinema is dead you say! Well, it is not true. There are men who have been watching, and are watching still, men working in the dark, fighting, sometimes victoriously, sometimes to fail like yourself.

You, no doubt, are failing brilliantly, for with your gifted work you have localised the public's attention. But your fault is that you fight alone.

I understand your love of solitude, your contempt for snobs and receptions. But what about your comrades? Your comrades of *Paris qui Dort*, of *l'Entracte*, of the happy days of Studio 28. They are here, struggling every day against the same difficulties that you are encountering.

Why not join them, René Clair? In your absence those few have been reinforced by many young men who will make their mark to-morrow. Form a united front against big business! Don't fight alone, for you will never succeed, and you will thereby deprive the screen of one of its best men. You *must* do it, for you still have the talent.

## *HEARST CRUSADES AGAINST MAE WEST*

*Copyright Vicky Publications.*

Twenty-eight newspapers in America, under the control of William Randolph Hearst, are conducting a crusade against Mae West.

Since her first film, *Night After Night*, in 1932, she has appeared in several films, including *I'm No Angel*, *Goin' to Town*, and now *Klondike Annie*, which was released on Washington's birthday.

The Hearst press are not accepting advertisements for the film, but the over-emphasis of their attitude is stimulating box-office activity and providing Paramount with free publicity.

# RADIO AND TELEVISION

## NEW PLAYS PLANNED; POETRY A FEATURE

**On May 1st the B.B.C. will broadcast D. G. Bridson's specially-written programme, "May Day in England."**

**The B.B.C. Drama Department's future plans include original radio plays by T. S. Eliot, Denis Johnston and other celebrated writers.**

In this article Grace Wyndham Goldie, broadcast drama critic to *The Listener*, discusses Bridson's contributions to the feature-programme. In future issues of *W.F.N.* she will report on important developments in radio drama.

• • •

Mr. Bridson is well worth watching. He is one of the most successful experimentalists now writing for broadcasting. The particular quality of his work, as his recent historical broadcast, "The March of the Forty-five" showed, is a fine free use of verse in conjunction with music and sound effects to produce feature programmes which are charged with emotion and the atmosphere of a period.

He uses verse and language which has style and beauty not because they are "literary," but because they are useful.

A mood carefully engendered in the listener by music and sound effects will quickly be killed by the flatness of ordinary realistic prose of the kind which dominates the theatre and the cinema. You can say the same thing in verse and resounding prose, your own or anybody else's, and maintain the mood. This Mr. Bridson does with an air of happy and careless gaiety; and poetry becomes once more a living thing, necessary to our entertainment, a part of our daily lives.

Here, under the auspices of the B.B.C., is quietly going on a literary revolution. Another sign of it is the recent announcement that T. S. Eliot, Denis Johnston and other dramatists of their calibre are to write plays specially for the microphone. In broadcast drama, poets and stylists seem likely to come once more into their own.

## ACE ADAPTER SCORES AGAIN— RADIO DRAMA FROM PARIS

**Jean Variot's eagerly-awaited adaptations of "Henry VIII" and "Macbeth" have been broadcast from Radio-Paris recently.**

**Variot, French author and theatrical producer, has specialised for several years in adapting the works of great authors for the microphone. His broadcasts have included adaptations of Shakespeare, Goethe, Schiller, Byron and Gogol. He has also produced and made gramophone records of Molière's "Le Médecin Malgré Lui" and "Hamlet." His play, "La Mauvaise Conduite" was given in London, in 1932, by the celebrated Compagnie des Quinze.**

Variot does not believe that original broadcast plays have much value. He holds that French radio playwrights, exalted by theoretical considerations of "sound-technique," have concentrated their energies on matters of no importance, such as accurate reproduction of crowd-noises and niceties of balance between music and speech.

While admitting that these efforts often achieve a passing success on the air, Variot complains that they hold no lasting public interest. People do not want to know, he claims, whether or not a play has been originally conceived in terms of radio; what they do want is to hear the works of great accepted authors.

So Variot has set himself the task of bringing the masterpieces of European literature to the microphone in terms of specially prepared adaptations. By recording these radio productions he hopes to build up a library widely representative of great European plays.

Jean Bérard, head of the Compagnie Française du Gramophone, has hitherto been the chief sponsor of Variot and other French artists in sound. His own recordings include a sensational disc of a mad woman telling her life-story, made in the mental hospital of Sainte Anne, Paris.

But Bérard is now to leave the gramophone world for films. His first film is to be the story of Paderewski's political life in Poland. After that he plans a series of magazine films about the work of other composers and playwrights.

**Gramophone a Separate Medium**

During his career as a chief of the French gramophone industry, Bérard did great things for modern music in France. He sponsored many experimental recordings and ensured public knowledge of the work of young composers.

Bérard believes that the 10-inch width of a small record is not an arbitrary measurement. That width, he says, can comfortably hold an average song, and in so doing fulfils a definite modern need. He maintains that gramophone recording must be regarded as a separate medium from broadcasting, since a recorded musical work will eventually be considered as a series of entities, each of so many minutes' duration.

In addition to his disc of the Hôpital Sainte Anne, Bérard has recorded a history of music in terms of progressive musical quotations, and a series of dramatised children's fairy tales.

## Wireless Concerts lose Edward Clarke

**News comes that Edward Clarke has left the B.B.C. The bold scope and high standard of the Contemporary Concerts have been largely due to his perseverance. Both listeners and the B.B.C. music department will regret his going.**

The most important music broadcasts announced for May are Alban Berg's violin concerto, completed shortly before his death last year, and Vladimir Vogel's *Wagadu*, a work for chorus and small orchestra. The Berg is scheduled for May 1st, and the Vogel for May 16th. The month's music will also include relays from Covent Garden opera house. The season opens on April 27th with *Die Meistersinger*. This will be broadcast in its entirety, a procedure almost unprecedented for the B.B.C.

The Berg concerto will be played by Krasner and conducted by Anton von Webern, himself a composer and close friend of Berg during his lifetime. Von Webern's series of Workers' Concerts in Vienna drew crowded houses, and won him wide fame as a conductor.

Vladimir Vogel, Russian composer living in Switzerland, is best known for his fine *Storm March* for brass, and for two rhythmic studies for orchestra. The choral writing of *Wagadu* is said to be difficult to a degree of virtuosity.

It is a pity that no room has been found for novelties in this season's opera. Practical difficulties may bar the production of Berg's *Wozzeck*, but means surely exist for the staging of Shostakovitch's *Lady Macbeth*. The broadcast of this work in March stirred up interest and discussion in many musical quarters. Why should Weinberger's delightful *Schwanda* be dropped when, with a little nursing, it might deservedly become a popular favourite?

## Hollywood Radio Fight but Lolly no like it

**Battle for picture names to appear on radio programmes is at its height here. Bing Crosby's Kraft Cheese hour, Al Jolson's Shell Chateau, Mary Pickford's United Ice hour, Louella Parson's Campbell's Soup airing and the Lux programme are the competitors for picture personalities.**

Miss Parsons is reported not liking the idea of Miss Pickford asking screen personalities and notables to appear on the United Ice Industries broadcast over Columbia network.

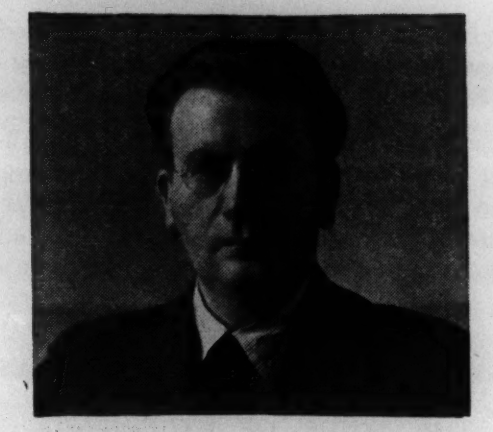
Lolly has been having a cinch on getting big personalities and studio co-operation on her programme, for which she gets around 1,500 dollars an etherisation, and which is a three-way split proposition with her employers. Space reimbursement for those who comply is the pay-off in the local Hearst papers and, of course, the Universal Service, for which she writes and syndicates her column.

When Miss Pickford started on the Ice etherisation, matters came to a head when Lolly is said to have conveyed word to Pickford-Lasky organisation that if Miss Pickford did not stop intruding on her radio idea there would be no publicity in her columns for the pictures of the company, or people working for them.

Lolly also is not pleased with Ginger Rogers going on a Pick-air programme and turning her down. Unless Miss Rogers comes through, it is said, she is also in the Parsons' "dog-house." Two others whom Miss Parsons is not so keen about for refusing to do a little soup-ethering are Fred Astaire and Frederic March. (*Variety*).

# JOHN LOGIE BAIRD

## Gives Story of his Struggles for Television



In a quiet avenue of South London stands a large house with an atmosphere of nineteenth-century propriety. Here lives John Logie Baird, inventor of television; and here Baird told me how he had spent his life striving to harness wireless waves for the transmission of pictures.

Leaving Glasgow University in 1914, he came to London with the idea of television already firmly fixed in his head. He had barely enough money to live on, and none to buy experimental equipment. "I moved around from boarding-house to boarding-house—bed and breakfast, 35s.; full board, Sundays," he explained.

"My apparatus moved around with me in a brown-paper parcel under my arm. I worked in my bedroom with a lot of old soap-boxes and things. Meantime, I had to keep myself from starving by inventing things and trying to get them marketed.

"Among the inventions were a non-corrosive glass razor and a system for wearing tyres on your boots to save energy in walking. The Baird glass razor ripped my face open at the first stroke, and as for the Baird tyred boots—one of the inner tubes burst in High Holborn while I was testing them."

In 1922, after a serious breakdown in health, Baird moved to Hastings, and in another boarding-house set up his ever-accumulating apparatus. Its chief ingredients were soap-boxes, cardboard, darning-needles, torch batteries and second-hand electric motors. Early in 1924, for the hundredth time, the old motors whirred, the darning-needles shook, the soap-boxes vibrated —and Baird saw the image of his own hand for the first time. "It's commonplace now," he said, "but I can tell you it made me jump then."

By every means in his power, Baird sought money to develop his invention. He demonstrated his apparatus to doctors, writers, company promoters; he circularised people right and left. Finally, with the help of his family, a public company was formed, and Baird was able to buy equipment and gather round him a group of assistants. Those assistants are now the senior officials and research-workers of Baird Television Ltd.

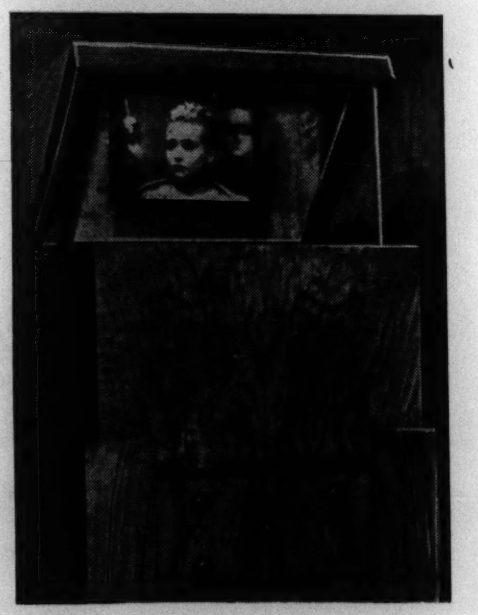
In a discussion of the relation of film technique to television, Baird said: "At present television cannot offer the film director much new scope since it is largely dependent on the use of film. But the television camera has certain advantages over the movie camera. For instance, the image from the television camera can be faded in and out at will by twisting a knob. So that if there is more than one camera recording a scene, the director can mix from one camera to another and superimpose the images as he wants.

"At a television demonstration at the Coliseum a few years back we arranged for the person being televised to answer questions from the screen. Stribling, the boxer, was televised from our Long Acre studio, and his image appeared on the screen in the theatre. A microphone was placed in the auditorium, with a loud-speaker in the studio where Stribling was sitting. The audience fired questions at him, and he answered them. The method could be used to enliven political meetings of the future."

## THEN AND NOW

*By Clinton Baddeley*

On March 6th, 1936, the *Daily Telegraph* television correspondent, reporting on the quality of the new B.B.C. television pictures, said: "The only important difference between them and the



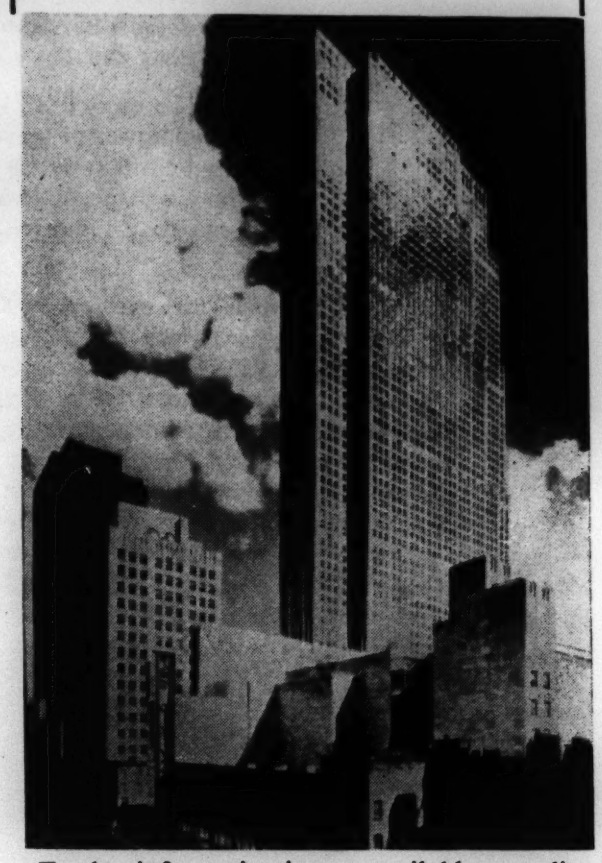
pictures on an ordinary cinema screen was a slight flicker." Minute details, such as the writing on a card, were revealed. "Sitters in the glare of studio lights were remarkably clear and life-like" when the electron camera was used, and in panoramic views objects could be distinguished at a distance of five miles.

The full significance of these sentences must have been lost to those who were unaware of the changes both in transmission methods and reception results since the early 30-line television days. "Sitters in the glare of studio lights"—up to the closing-down of the 30-line transmissions from Broadcasting House in 1935, the main characteristic of television acting was that it was done not in glaring light but in Stygian darkness. The only illuminant was the brilliant flickering beam which was directed upon the performer, dazzling him to such an extent that he could with difficulty keep to the two or three positions necessary for the focus of the camera. It was an alarming business in those days.

The B.B.C.'s first television play was transmitted on July 14th, 1930. Unlike the early film directors, who delighted in the beginning in a little simple horse-play, the B.B.C. strangely selected to do Pirandello's obscure play, *The Man with a Flower in his Mouth*, which was rendered even more obscure by the manner of its presentation and the drab and jigging image which the camera reproduced. Very often, as with the old films, the picture slipped. Little alternation of scene was possible, and the producer was driven to vary the picture by introducing long close-ups of the actors' hands, a spectacle not particularly entertaining.

The following five years saw big advances. Dancing, small revues, pantomimes, Zoo animals were all successfully transmitted. But when transmissions ceased in 1935 the picture was still confined and, except in close-up, dark. In short, we could not read the writing on a card, nor distinguish objects five miles away.

## R.C.A. Enters Television Field



Further information is now available regarding American television projects mentioned in last month's *W.F.N.*

R.C.A. are building a television studio in the National Broadcasting Company's station in Radio City, New York. This studio will be linked with an experimental transmitter now under construction in the Empire State Building. First transmissions are expected in April or May, when R.C.A. test receivers will tour New York recording signal strengths and other technical data.

R.C.A. emphasise that the building of this experimental station does not mean that a regular American television service is at hand. Their 1935 annual report states: "It will be necessary to co-ordinate a number of important elements before television on a regular basis of service can be established. These are the essential pioneering stages in the development of an art in which considerable expenditures must be made for research before returns can be expected. As the work goes on, it may be necessary to return to the laboratory from time to time to seek the solution to practical problems encountered in the field."

R. R. Beal, acting chairman of R.C.A.'s Television Committee, has denied that the Corporation contemplates marketing television receivers in the near future. No further information is divulged regarding future television projects, and it is considered that R.C.A.'s principal interests in radio and film equipment must necessarily make their entry into the television field a matter of delicacy.

# RADIO—THE PROBLEM OF THE AUDIENCE

**To those who remember—or continue—the discovery of the film medium, the discovery of the laws of television must appear an equally exciting prospect. But the history of film is likely to be repeated. Very seldom have the laws of film been discovered out of the zeal for exploration. As with Marco Polo, Columbus and the others, discoveries have been made as by-products of more material adventures.**

In the excitement of the first primitive period of film, there was emphasis on its power of trickery and its power of movement. An artist like Melies loved these things for themselves; but they were also suited to the novelty atmosphere of the nickelodeons and the first audiences. Film drama did not come in response to the artist's desire to exploit the capacity of film for size and sweep. It came from a desire to exploit the publicity value of "famous players" like Bernhardt.

The promoter leads with his eye on the audience; the artist follows. It was always the custom of kings to take clerks on their travels; and the method still obtains. But it is not the clerks who dictate the line of march; they merely make the best of a compulsory journey. So they took slapstick out of cinema vaudeville, epic out of wild western, documentary out of the limited film finance of propaganda, and montage out of (*a*) Russia's desire to shout international messages, and (*b*) Russia's shortage of film stock.

Much the same thing has happened in broadcasting, except that the clerks have not been so quick to exploit their opportunities. The exercise of radio has been determined exclusively by the desire to fulfil audience services. Music, public information, education, light entertainment have been given because large masses of the people wanted them. But they have been given straight, without any historic attempt on the part of the artist to convert or enliven them on their mechanised journey to the audience.

Two facts emerge. The first is that it is useless for the artist to attempt a discovery of television without reference to audience demands. He will quite definitely not be permitted across the frontier. The second fact is that the tradition of radio suggests a more slavish service of the audience than the tradition of cinema—and a minimum of discovery, unless a real effort is made to wake the creative conscience of the B.B.C.

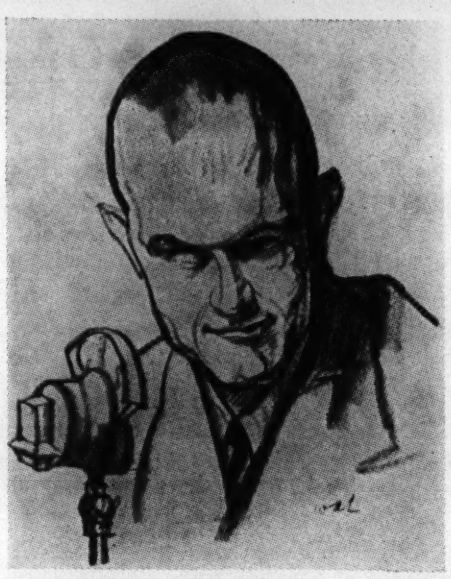
To any such criticism the B.B.C. replies that it must be simple: it must think of its millions. We can answer that, and shortly. The necessary simplicity and the necessary millions of cinema have not prevented Chaplin, Cruze, Griffith and Pudovkin. More radically we answer: Who are these millions the B.B.C. people are always talking about? There is vanity, and nonsense, in the conception.

The B.B.C. has a monopoly of air time, and this it distributes sensibly to a hundred different audiences: some directly educational, some informational, some entertaining, some in the highest sense æsthetic. It has services for majority audiences, but it has also services which are either minority or sectional: to farmers, seamen, schoolchildren, specialists in music, etc. Not every B.B.C. audience is a majority audience; not every listening mood is a majority mood.

No consideration of radio psychology—and of television psychology to come—can avoid these issues. There will be consideration of minority appeals as well as majority ones. Creative achievement as well as simple report will be expected of it. Too many people are now instructed in visual image to allow the art of television—like the art of microphone—to be trifled with.

These things granted, there must continue to be vast differences between the attitude to radio and the attitude to film. Television will reflect them. (*To be continued.*)

**THE VOICE OF EXPERIENCE**



M. Sayle Taylor, High Priest of U.S. radio stars. He operates a nation-wide confession service, and receives 2,000 confessions a day.

## *More Competition in Television*

It is announced that a new private company, Scophony Ltd., has been formed to take over television patents and processes from a previous company of the same name. The capital is £140,000 in £1 shares.

Scophony Ltd. control the television inventions of G. W. Walton, a Lancashire engineer. The patents include a mechanical scanning system designed to give projected television pictures of the size of a home-movie screen. The company is reported as being about to embark on the manufacture of high-definition television receivers.

On the board are Sir Maurice Bonham Carter, W. S. Verrells, chairman of E. K. Cole Ltd. (makers of Ecko radio sets), and Oscar Deutsch, governing director of Odeon Theatres Ltd.

# GOOD WORK ON THE NORTH REGIONAL

## *George Audit writes:*

I think you were wise to print that interview with Gilliam, because it is obviously important to maintain contact with him, and I believe he can be influenced in the right direction. But I don't think much of him as an artist. His stuff has no *shape*.

There is only one creative combination in that side of broadcasting, and London hardly knows of it at all. I mean Harding and Bridson of the North Region. They produced the "45" programme—one of the most interesting historical dramas ever written for broadcasting. Bridson is exceptionally talented, and some of the stuff he puts out from Manchester would lift your ears up.

Perhaps it is just as well that some of the London officials' sets do not get that station very easily.

Bridson and Harding have worked out an interesting technique around the character of "Harry Hopeful"—an unemployed Lancashire lad. "Harry" is the focussing point of many of their actuality programmes. They believe that the microphone ear is too cold and dispassionate a witness of the material presented.

Listeners require a presence to represent themselves in documentary programmes—a sort of homely Ariel who will suggest their own reactions.

Bridson's programme on "May-Day in England," which was broadcast from the North Region two years ago, is being put out on the National wavelength on May 1st this year. I remember the shock of surprise on hearing it the first time; it was, I believe, Bridson's first appearance in radio.

The programme outlines the celebrations of May-Day in England from the fourteenth century. The scenes are almost all described by quotations from contemporary observers. Chaucer; the Italian ambassador to the court of Henry VIII, who witnesses a 'prentices' revolt on May-Day; Bishop Latimer, locked out of church on May-Day because the parishioners have all gone off to the woods; the Puritans who banish the maypole, and Pepys who sees it return.

With the coming of the Industrial Age, the yearly record of strikes and wage struggles is punctuated by verses of "I'm to be Queen of the May, Mother." The story catches us up with the declaration of the General Strike on May 1st, 1926, while a bemused yokel dreams he is still living in a rustic age.

"May-Day in England" is a proper use of the documentary method. Such a theme can command the whole period of English literature, and Bridson makes full use of its rich material.

# "Lonesome Pine"—Hollywood Dusts off Adjectives

**News from America suggests that Walter Wanger's "Trail of the Lonesome Pine" has taken the place that "Becky Sharp" was meant to fill in the history of cinema. "Hollywood dusts off adjectives as trade press critics write raves on 'Trail' " is how its delighted distributors describe the first press reaction. All newspaper critics seem to have joined in agreeing that colour has at last arrived.**

**"Lonesome Pine" was directed by Henry Hathaway, with Sylvia Sidney as June Tolliver. Story is from the John Fox classic drama of life in the Kentucky mountains. "It is not just another colour picture" says one critic. " 'Lonesome Pine' is planned colour." No details, however, of what is meant by planned colour are added. "Hot or cold, it's a hit" is as far as American critics will venture into æsthetic. More definite is the information that the major American companies have decided, as a result, to go into production with outdoor dramas in colour.**

**Alex. Strasser writes:**

The colour film is on its way. Whether it will supplant the black-white film completely, as the talkie superseded the silent film, will depend upon box-office reaction. Nothing more can be said about it in the present stage of development. The picture one might feel inclined to sketch is utterly distorted by the fact that, to-day, colour brings a new scale of costs. Colour, in addition, must become for the film-producer a medium of the same technical perfection and practicability as black-and-white. The director must be in a position to think and create in colour. He must be able to realise his ideas to the fullest extent. It must aid creation; it must not hamper it.

Very likely we must still wait for some time until "utterly beautiful colour" has become plainly and simply and practically "Colour."

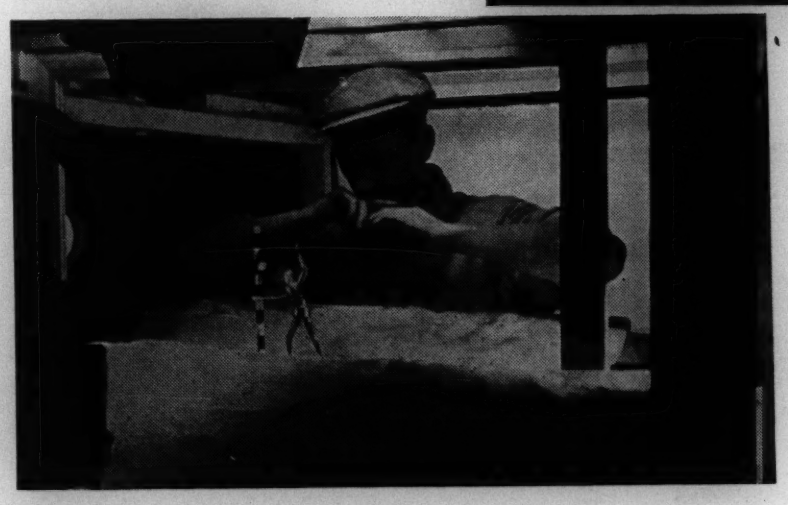
**Dr. Kalmus writes:**

"The production of the film has given three important pointers to the industry: first, it was made to a time-schedule no longer than that required for a corresponding film in black-and-white; second, the colour-printing took only two days longer than black-and-white printing, the extra time being chiefly devoted to colour balancing; third, colour can now be reproduced in any shade of intensity."

Dr. Kalmus claims that colour need no longer be regarded as an extravagant burden on production expenses, and that the industry must now face the studio problems involved in its use. Set-decoration, make-up and lighting are, he thinks, the three production departments which will require re-organisation to meet the demands of colour photography.

## GASPARCOLOR EXPERTS AT WORK

**Below, Len Lye, the brilliant Australian colourist, studies a model while Humphrey Jennings (right) production supervisor, chooses a location.**



*Gasparcolor's latest film "The Birth of the Robot" is reviewed on page 25.*

## ASQUITH TO DIRECT COLOUR FILM

**Arrangements have been made for working in Great Britain, under the name "Opticolor," the well-known French "Francita" Colour Process. The method is three-colour additive. That is to say, the film itself is black-and-white, and each frame contains three reduced-size pictures arranged *en échelon*. These are produced, of course, by means of a special three-element camera lens, each element taking through an appropriate colour-filter.**

For projection, a similar lens-assembly is needed in place of the usual projection lens. It is proposed to hire out the projection lenses along with the films. Of course, the advantage of this type of colour-process is that it involves no extra expense in the manufacture and processing of the film, whereas in subtractive and mosaic-additive processes each reel has a formidable monetary value. Moreover, an indefinite number of identical prints can be secured.

Mr. Vell, who is at present staying in this country to supervise operations, is himself a cameraman who has been decorated for his services to photography by the French Government.

He spoke with enthusiasm of the future of the process, and of the great strides which it has already made in France. Last year a film was made reproducing a hundred of the pictures in the great Italian Art Exhibition at Paris, and M. Echolier, the curator of the Louvre, and organiser of the exhibition, consented to supply the commentary. Surgical films have also been made, and numerous scenic films, one of which includes the famous stained-glass windows at Chartres. *Jeunes Filles à Marier*, a full-length film entirely in colour, ran for three months at the Aubert Palace in Paris, and made a very favourable impression. Three hundred cinemas in France are now equipped for the process.

The production company which is being formed in this country will begin with a full-length drama, to be directed by Anthony Asquith. The idea is to choose some distinctively English subject and to make no special feature of colour-effects, but to treat colour-photography as something normal and usual. An all-colour news-reel service will also be started, and the production of colour cartoons will receive attention.

## BEST CRITICISM OF THE MONTH

# VON STERNBERG—HIS DEVELOPMENT ANALYSED

**Meyer Levin writes in "Esquire":**

**Last year Mr. Von Sternberg came along with "The Scarlet Empress," which was completed just after a British film on the same subject, "Catherine the Great," had been released.**

**It is pertinent to the understanding of Von Sternberg's treatment of "Crime and Punishment" to remember that he was booed all over the lots for his over-embroidery of the screen when "Scarlet Empress" was shown. He sacrificed story, action, characterisation, actors, to a passion for ornate atmospheric composition. In comparison, "Catherine the Great" was a direct, speedy picturisation of the same theme, built around a virtuoso performance by Elisabeth Bergner.**

**Now, Mr. Von Sternberg seems to have taken to heart the criticism of his lavishly subtle technique. He has literally torn away the veils through which he loved to film the faces of his actors.**

**From Sternberg's "Crime and Punishment"**

The only trouble is that Mr. Von Sternberg learned his lesson too well, and chose the wrong vehicle.

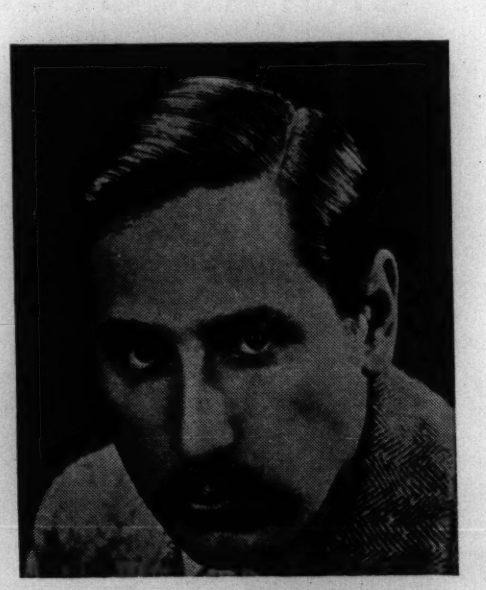
Curiously enough, the circumstances of the last comparison are repeated. Again, the scene is Russia. Again, Mr. Von Sternberg had the advantage of being able to view a completed foreign product before finishing his own work.

But from the way Von Sternberg went at it, his name might have been plain Joe Stern again. And I would trust a Joe Stern before a Joseph Von Sternberg.

The story, in brutal simplicity, is of a brilliant student of crime who, on graduating from the university, finds himself broke. His sister is about to marry for money. "Money! Money! Money!" his needs scream on every side. So he murders and robs a pawnbroker. The rest is a man-hunt.

Granted that Joe Stern's picture is addressed to the sub-literary mass audience which might have an idea of Dickens, but would be unlikely to have an idea of Dostoevsky, he has an æsthetic right to adapt rather than translate *Crime and Punishment*. He starts out by saying "this might happen any time, anywhere." He presents his characters in present-day business suits instead of in the frock coats and high hats worn by Russian students of the period of the novel. By showing a Russian newspaper in one scene, and by other minor touches, he conveys the idea that this has a Russian background, but the emphasis on time and place is skilfully reduced.

So far, so good.



**Josef von Sternberg**

For the sake of simplicity, then, Joe Stern omits the murder of the innocent sister. No philosophic complications, no atmospheric hair-splitting. This is a story of a man who needs money, kills someone to get it, and is finally caught by the cops.

Well, all right. But, so is *Show Them No Mercy*, so is *Mary Burns, Fugitive*, to cite some of the more excellent treatments of the recent versions of this most prolifically treated of themes. Joe Stern has simplified himself right down to the class of the Hollywood crime story. The only thing that distinguishes his film is the fact that the criminal is an intellectual instead of a mug.

Dostoevsky's novel is so rich that it would, of course, be impossible to simplify all value out of the story. The outline itself, as I remarked last month, is the perfect cops-and-robber scenario, and the chunks of action that Joe Stern has retained out of this outline serve nobly. But with the over-simplification of the psychological factors, the film tosses away its chances of distinction.

* * *

My preference is, naturally, the French film. But granting every premise of simplification that Joe Stern took, and looking at the result in the light of what he tried to do, his *Crime and Punishment* is a healthier and more successful film than the products of his atmospheric era.

**From Chenal's "Crime et Chatiment"**

## *Crime et Chatîment*

**Graham Greene in the "Spectator"**

This is a more than usually intelligent film, and what of the novel's theme *can* be converted into visual terms has been converted. Raskolnikov's unbalanced pride is well suggested: in the mockery of a hat, in his crazy isolation as he makes his way through the friendly evening crowds to the scene of his crime; and of his sensitive conscience you can have no doubt watching M. Pierre Blanchar's hollow, handsome, haunted features.

But after all there is more to Dostoievsky's story than a case of conscience; Raskolnikov is a more subtle figure than Eugene Aram and a more general one. The director has not met his first difficulty: the fact that the book is written from inside Raskolnikov's brain.

M. Chenal's camera takes its stand on the outside, the world's side. It would have been far better to have dropped the realistic approach altogether, to have battered the real theme into us with soliloquies, with aerial voices, with dream imagery, with every kind of super-realist trick.

## *We are disappointed*

That the late Wesley Hill, the original Gabriel of *Green Pastures*, will not shout "Gang way for the Lord God Jehovah" in the Warner Bros. film version.

That the Ministry of Health leaves it to the Gas, Light and Coke Co. and Cadbury's Chocolates to finance the health and housing propaganda we expect from it.

That the little Bergner's illness should be able to cause so much disaster.

That the Bali-Bali moonshine should make Chaplin talk idiotically of abandoning Charlie.

That Mélies, easily the most brilliant director of the early films recently revived, should not have been present to share the acclamation.

# H. G. WELLS

## Answers his Critics

**Graham Greene's criticism of "Things to Come" in our last issue is answered by Wells himself in the current issue of "March of Time."**

**His answer is that, however one may react to the film treatment, "Things to Come" does at least—and unlike most films—raise an issue of great public importance.**

"You see, to the end of time, the principal appeal of the film will be to love laughter and personal adventure. But, although that is the substance, and will remain the substance, of most films, it does not exhaust all the possibilities of interest in the world.

"At the present time there are a great many general interests which oppress men's minds and excite and interest them. There is the onset of war, there is the increase of power, there is the change of scale and the change of conditions in the world; and in our film we have been trying, without any propaganda, or pretensions, or preachment of any sort, to work out some of these immense possibilities that appeal, we think, to every man. We are attempting here the film of imaginative possibility."

## WE HOPE:

That Gasparcolor will hold and develop the excellent unit created by C. H. Dand.

That Angus MacPhail, associate producer at Gaumont-British, will step out of the studios and publish the ideas he says he has for documentary production.

That the lecture series on fishing contemplated by the B.B.C. will not be afraid of vested interests.

That publicity officers will realise the value of shooting their indoor publicity films in winter, and their outdoor publicity films in summer—and not vice versa.

That the same publicity officers will not all make up their minds at once to begin work in May, and start fighting for the very few competent directors available.

That the present mania for building studio space will soon make studios such a glut on the market that independents will come into their own.

# FILMS THAT CHANGE THEIR NAMES

## by ALAN WEIR (Leeds Mercury)

British film producers are not so prone to altering as are the Americans, who are said to alter about half of their titles between buying a story and releasing the finished film to the public.

Sometimes changes are made for reasons beyond the producer's control, as when the censor refuses to pass a title. A recent example is *Dawn of Life*, which was made about four years ago and shown in America under the title, *Life Begins*. It was sent to England as *The Way of Life*. Under that title and in its original form, the film could not get past the censor. Extensive cuts were made, and the title was changed to *Dawn of Life*, and the censor was satisfied.

*Main Street*, Sinclair Lewis's most famous novel, is being given to American film-goers as *I Married a Doctor*. It may still reach England as *Main Street*.

Paul Muni's *The Story of Louis Pasteur* was first publicised in America as *Enemy of Man*. It was privately shown as *Death Fighter*, and then it reverted to *The Story of Louis Pasteur*.

*It Happened in Hollywood* was submitted to several changes, including *Two Faces* and *Another Face*. The Bette Davis film, *Men on her Mind*, was variously called *The Maltese Falcon* (which had been used on a previous film), *The Girl from Tenth Avenue*, *Money Man* and *The Man with the Black Hat*.

Two men wrote a story entitled *Money Brides*. The studio changed it to *Lover, Come Back to Me*, and sent out the necessary publicity. As soon as shooting began, they renamed it *Gallagher*. It was released as *Platinum Blonde*.

Marlene Dietrich started work some time ago on a new film announced as *Desire*. Recently the title was changed in U.S.A. to *Invitation to Happiness*.

Mae West, who always has title-trouble, hesitated over *Klondike Lou*, *Klondike Doll* and *Klondike Annie* before settling on the last name for her latest film.

**"BAD BLOOD" into "TOP GEAR"**

Of British films, Anna Neagle's *Limelight* had several names, including *The Street Singer*; a film produced as *Bad Blood*, with John Mills and Lili Palmer, is now announced to be *Top Gear*; *The King's Pyjamas* (in which Clive Brook and Helen Vinson are starring) has been altered to *Love in Exile*; and *Three on a Honeymoon* has become *Where's Sally*?

If you cannot trace any of these films to the cinemas, don't blame me. Blame the title-changers.

# CANTOR and LLOYD

## Window-Dressers in Comedy

There are two ways of dressing a shop window. Either you may put into it everything you can think of, and thus catch the public eye by sheer quantity and variety, or else, more subtly, you may place in the centre of it just one solitary hat or tooth-brush, or whatever it may be, and leave it at that. Both methods produce results.

In Eddie Cantor's comedies, United Artists and Mr. Goldwyn pin their faith to the first of these two styles. They believe in making a splash. On the principle of the old riddle, they call to mind what they first thought of in earlier comedies, double it, add a little something the others hadn't got, and finish off with that smooth polish which only Hollywood can apply.

Almost one can imagine the conference which must have preceded their latest effort, *Strike Me Pink*. A list would have been drawn up of the different tastes which had to be catered for.

One by one they would be ticked off. First the tired business man (a tick—Gorgeous Goldwyn Girls in generous proportions), then tap-dancing enthusiasts (another tick—the Astaire-Rogers combination has much to answer for), the "I want my money's worth" school (another tick—elaborate chase on expensive scenic railway set), sentiment (why ask?), and even the mere slapstick and Cantor fans are not forgotten.

United Artists know, if one may coin a phrase, the questions and they have the answers.

Harold Lloyd goes about his business in a different way, but if the critical hat is to be raised, it must be to the battling milkman and his manager. Every great comedian of the screen has entered the ring at one time or another in his career. To a man they have got entangled in the ropes; almost to a man they have been funny about it.

Harold Lloyd is no exception. His fight in the closing scenes of *The Milky Way* may not be so hair-raising as Eddie Cantor's chase on the giant switch-back, but it is every bit as funny.

Very wisely, Harold Lloyd does not attempt too much himself. Throughout he is willing to let others in the cast have their fair share of the limelight, and he is most ably supported by Adolphe Menjou and Veree Teasdale, to say nothing of some sparkling dialogue. Miss Teasdale's wisecracks come over as fast as the milkman's punches, but with more effect, and Adolphe Menjou is back to his *Front Page* form.

There may be less in Harold Lloyd's window, but what there is is good. The hat is at a rakish angle; the tooth-brush fairly bristles with wit.

That Educational and General Services, in paying cash down for educational films, will find many imitators.

That when English money has bought Universal, Paramount, M.G.M., Warners and all the other American companies, Americans will still go on making American films.

That the committee set up by the Board of Trade to consider quota will examine carefully our article in last issue on "The Scandal of Quota."

That the proposal of both G.B. and Korda to produce films of General Gordon will make for bigger and better biography. And that Mussolini will buy the world-rights on both versions.

# *News From Abroad*

The film of Hervey Allen's *Anthony Adverse*, best-seller novel, is being directed by Mervyn le Roy for Warner Brothers.

Twelve men spent six months collecting authentic historical data of the Napoleonic war period, and it has taken two years to complete the script.

* * *

Eugene Schufftan, inventor of the Schufftan trick process, has done the camera-work on a Spanish film, *Maria de la O*.

* * *

Mussolini has ordered the Banca Nationale del Lavoro to form a film department, which will give credit to film companies.

Especial interest is shown for films dealing with war, and the subjugation of uncultured races.

* * *

Tancred Ibsen, son of the Norwegian playwright, Henrik Ibsen, has directed a dramatic feature, *Poor Millionaire*, for Swedish Ire Films.

* * *

The Syndicat d'Artisans Français du Film, in a letter to the French Ministry of Labour, complains that there are too many foreigners in French studios.

* * *

Representative Culkin, of New York, speaking on the Pettengill anti-block booking and blind-selling bill in Congress, urges that cinemas in the United States should be a public utility under Federal supervision.

* * *

Joris Ivens' *Rain*, *Borinage* and *New Earth* have been shown for the first time in America by the New York New Film Alliance. Ivens, last heard of in Russia, was present, and spoke on Russian production.

* * *

The first French animated cartoon, *Pierrette*, has been made by Pierre Bourgeon.

* * *

Andre Roosevelt, cousin of President Roosevelt, is heading a camera expedition into unexplored regions of Ecuador.

Although the expedition is primarily for scientific purposes, a silent film will be made.

* * *

The Educational Film Department of the Svensk Film Industry, the biggest Swedish company, has arranged for distribution of their pictures throughout Britain and America.

* * *

Darryl Zanuck will produce some war films for Fox next year.

The announced reason is that the Will Hays Code, by doing away with gangster films, has killed adventure on the screen.

* * *

A studio has been opened in Paris for doctoring, re-arranging and "saving" films "in trouble."

* * *

The Authors' League of America is attempting to form an American Writers' Trust, which will act for the Authors' Guild, the Dramatists' Guild, and the Broadcasting Writers' Guild. The League will deal with writers' contracts, working conditions, etc.

# IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE!

## AMERICAN LABOUR PROTEST

The Central Labour Council of Los Angeles, backed by the five million members of the American Federation of Labour, are protesting vigorously to the American government against the present widespread use of U.S. Army and Navy personnel in movie production.

They point out that the studios have saved one million dollars in recent months in wages alone by the use of the military and naval forces in films depicting fighting-service themes. This saving has caused drastic loss of employment to actors, production experts and other film workers.

Military and naval themes have lately figured large in Hollywood production schedules. *Shipmates Forever*, *Follow the Fleet*, *Miss Pacific Fleet*, *Thunder in the East*, *Professional Soldier*, *Westpoint of the Air*—these and other films, representing the use of the fighting forces, are cited against the production companies by the labour spokesmen. They emphasise that the competence of studio craftsmanship to re-enact war scenes has been proved by such films as *What Price Glory*, *The Big Parade*, *Farewell to Arms* and *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

The Screen Actors' Guild of Hollywood alleges that the practice has now extended to dressing up the military in the uniforms of foreign armies.

It is said that in a recent Warner Bros. production, *Sons o' Guns*, some two hundred members of the California National Guard were dressed as German soldiers. They prepared their film manœuvres during official drill hours, and then obtained leave of absence from their regular jobs to assist at the shooting of the film. They displaced two hundred actors. In most cases no payment is made by the producing company, the military authorities supplying personnel, equipment, and expert advice free of charge.

Aggravating the grievance is the feeling that exhibitors of the service-made films are reaping financial benefits accruing from the high exploitation-value of authentic atmosphere and material while the circumstances of production have created unemployment in the studios. The more sinister consideration of free propaganda to the U.S. War Department is also a source of extreme indignation.

# Where Children May HISS—

**Miss Winifred Harley, organiser of the Children's Film Society's monthly meetings at the Everyman Theatre, Hampstead, employs two simple tests to discover the audience's reaction to different films.**

In the first test, Miss Harley demands that the children shall clap the films they like and hiss the films they dislike. A half-and-half reaction is followed by discussion among the children to clarify the intentions of the film. At the showing of the G.P.O. film, *Colour Box*, the audience began by hissing, but caught up the rhythm as the film progressed, and ended by clapping.

In the second test, Miss Harley invites individual criticisms of the films by post. A six-year-old appreciation of a comedy ran: "I like the coloured film best where the funny man put a bullet on instead of his head, and that's why I like it because he put on a bullet instead of his head." —which is perhaps as near as anyone has got to an æsthetic of humour.

Miss Harley claims that these tests have revealed that the children prefer a programme of shorts to a normal feature programme, and that a specially-edited news-reel may well be used as an instrument for promoting discussion. She is planning future programmes on a shorts basis.

At every meeting a talk is given by a film-worker. Paul Rotha, Mary Field, Stuart Legg and Evelyn Spice have each explained one aspect of production. Visits to the cinema's projection-room are also organised so that the children may acquire knowledge of the technical side of showing films.

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# EDITORIAL

## Foreigners in our Midst

**LAST MONTH** *W.F.N.* published, under the heading "Hegira," a list of German *émigrés*. Most of them are now working in British studios. They have joined the hundreds of experts who have come in from European countries and the United States. From a film point of view, England represents a gold rush, with all the gaudy, undisciplined excitement associated with gold-rushing. A cosmopolitan crowd is fighting for overnight fortunes. Promotion is more important than production.

We have only one interest in this glamorous scene, and it is not in the profits of promotion. We want to see good British films; we want to see the creative reputation of this country stand high in the main streets of the world. We believe this tangled scene is a necessary stage in the process.

### THE GAIN

A great deal of sucker-money has flooded into production on the heels of Korda's remarkable success with *Henry VIII*. Not all the sucker-money will avoid disappointment. But the present rush stage is a necessary stage. It breeds excitement and ambition. It gives to British production what it has always lacked: a Napoleonic scale in its production plans. In the long run, the mad talkers and the wild promisers will do better than they know, and will be more effective than they intend.

### GREAT NAMES

We welcome, therefore, the adventurers from abroad, though we would not perhaps send a wreath to some of their funerals. Our film world will be the better for them. It will even survive them. And particularly we welcome the great directorial and camera and script names which are being thrown as security into the financial struggle. We welcome Pommer, Lubitsch, Korda, Kortner, Bergner, Cavalcanti, Clair, Sherwood, Ned Mann and a hundred others. We know their quality and we shall learn from them.

We make only one reservation. We ask the foreigners not to turn our British hospitality into a racket. While we appreciate the quality of directorial and camera aces, we ask that they will not use our appreciation as an excuse for bringing in every Tom, Dick and Harry, or German or American equivalent, who happen to be related, or for whom they happen to be sorry.

### TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING

We draw the attention of the Ministry of Labour, the Home Office, all the Members of Parliament and all the national newspapers to what may well become too much of a good thing. We ask them particularly to see that every foreign ace is forced to have a British crew. We have no use for foreign assistant directors, assistant script writers, assistant cameramen and assistant editors.

A thousand young men, both inside the industry and on its doorstep, stand ready to fill all the places of apprenticeship. Let the foreigners return our hospitality by teaching them, and, if they are unwilling, let the Ministry of Labour give them no option.

That way we can secure not only the present of the industry but, what is more important, its future.

## Radio v. Film

**THE B.B.C.** will be given a further ten years of office. We join with other papers in giving them our ceremonial blessing, though we have not the same motives. We are not, like other papers, interested in keeping out competitive advertising, excellent advertising medium as *World Film News* undoubtedly is (still a thousand or two short of the *News of the World*, but that is not surprising).

### TRIBUTE FROM WARDOUR STREET

We give our blessing plainly because the B.B.C. represents a mass of good intention and, a mass of good work. Its work for music is particularly distinguished. Its lecture service brings to the public the authoritative word of the nation's experts.

The best tribute we have heard paid to the B.B.C. was recently from a hard-bitten Wardour Street journalist. Discarding the Wardour Street pretence that the B.B.C. is a wash-out, he said: "The B.B.C. never forgets its first duty. It serves society. I wish sometimes that Wardour Street would remember, just a very little, to do the same."

### ONE COMPLAINT

So, if in the course of our comment on broadcasting and television, this paper takes a critical line, it is with agreement on central principles. We have only one complaint to make, and this our Manifesto of last month explained in detail. The B.B.C. is largely reproductive in its methods and not creative. It does not yet realise that a great and necessary experience of our time might be given by organising lecture, description and interview in a more imaginative way.

### B.B.C.'s ANSWER

We are answered in our criticism by a complacent article in the *Radio Times*. This article suggests that the great audience of the B.B.C. wants its broadcasts simple, and that imaginative experiment would tend to be difficult. It also points to the fact that broadcasts are done quickly and cheaply, and that the new method would be too slow and too expensive.

These are good reasons, and perhaps the difficulties are really insurmountable. If so, both broadcasting and television will fail continuously to interest the more creative minds of our generation. It will be without the excitement we find in great journalism and interpretative art.

### THE YOUNG MEN

Young men who are looking to the new arts as media of expression will note this distinction, and they will be slow to enter the service of the B.B.C. If they are artists at all they will despair of finding in the slight and simple exercises of the microphone the opportunity they seek; and they will wisely stand by the superior opportunities of film.

The film world has its great majority activities, and some of them are not very enticing. But unlike broadcasting, it also permits minorities.

## "Congratulations, it's an Earthquake!"

**THE FIRST NUMBER** of *World Film News* had an exciting and varied reception. Friends and enemies sorted themselves out immediately and with violence, and there was no middle course. An untimely telephone call from *The Times* cursed us roundly for our make-up. McKnight Kauffer threatened personal violence by 'phone, and wired ironically "Congratulations, it's an earthquake." The old *Cinema Quarterly* end of the paper took itself quietly to bed.

But for every word of opposition there came a dozen unexpected words of congratulation on this very make-up. Workers in the studios joined with educationists, publicity officers, high officials of the B.B.C. and newspaper editors in giving us welcome.

### "LITERATURE" EXPECTED

We shall not publish the plaudits, and we would not dare to publish the curses. But the reaction may be summed up as follows. Our policy is to give information, and concentrate on all creative efforts in the fields of cinema and broadcasting—both high-brow and low-brow. And we are obviously meeting the needs of people who, like ourselves, are actively interested in the two media.

But we fear a certain amount of "literature" is still expected wherever art is discussed. We respect this demand, and hope on occasion to put on our very best academic suiting, but, in general, we shall continue to be as practical in our interests as we can. Art and education and entertainment are to us a practical business, with no great dressing of fol-de-rol. They have to be financed; they have to be thought of; they have to be made.

We shall, we think, miss none of their inspiration by giving the facts, and giving them in terms of action. We only desire that our service of information will strike still deeper into the field, and give a still more active picture of a world in progress.

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# PRESS ACCUSES GERMANY: VIOLATION OF FILM AGREEMENT ALLEGED

Accusations are being made that recent German films are a threat to world peace.

Press critics are saying that a resolution passed at the Berlin International Film Congress in 1935, to help promote world goodwill, is being scandalously broken by recent German productions.

The resolution called on the world's press "not to review or support any films likely to arouse misunderstanding between nations or endanger international peace."

It is pointed out that Inkishinov, the hero of the Soviet film, *Storm Over Asia*, has been starred in a recent German production, *Friesennot* ("The Misery of the Frieseians"). In it he is a commissar, the big, bad Soviet wolf, in a story about a half-caste girl who is drowned by the Volga Germans because she has associated with a Bolshevik.

Other films are said to contain savage propaganda against the U.S.S.R. They are: *Henker, Frauen und Soldaten* ("Henchmen, Women and Soldiers") and *Schwarze Rosen* ("Dark Roses").

More subtle propaganda is claimed for films dealing with French subjects such as *Das Maedchen Johanna* (a German version of the Joan of Arc theme), *Liselotte von der Pfalz*, and *Der Hoehere Befehl* ("The Higher Command"). In these, critics have detected an anti-French tendency partly disguised in mediæval or eighteenth-century dress.

It is to be noted that *Second Bureau*, a French film recently seen in London, makes Germany very much the villain in a melodramatic story of espionage and treachery.

### 卐 JOSEPH GOEBBELS SETS RULES FOR CINEMA

"卐 The film must follow its own laws and break off from the ordinary story.

"卐 It must free itself from the vulgar mediocrity of a mob amusement, yet never lose its intimate relations with the masses of the people: public taste is educable in the good and the bad sense.

"卐 Its scope is incredibly wide, but more than any form of art, the film must be popular in the best sense.

"卐 It must deal with the relations of common life.

"卐 It must have State support, like music and drama.

"卐 It must be in harmony with the spirit of the times.

And again . . 卐 . .

"The straightforward and natural film, giving vivid and plastic expression to our times, may become one of the most valuable tools in the construction of a better, purer and more realistic world of artistic possibilities. Let us resolve to be natural as life is natural and true to the facts which ring true, so that the film can raise the hearts of man and lead them into a better world through the relation of the Eternal."

## *Russian Army Salutes Pratt Boorman*

**Pratt Boorman, editor of the "Kent Messenger," has had the unusual notion of presenting to his readers the Russian record of the Kiev manœuvres. From the Soviet Embassy, where it was shown to an exclusive audience and bewildered military experts, with its spectacular scenes of Russia's parachute army, this film moved direct to Maidstone and Canterbury.**

Voroshilov's Bolsheviks were warmly welcomed by the farmers of the fruit belt, and excited readers of the *Messenger* made the journey from Lenham, Harrietsham, and points east to report at the midnight showing, and consider the latest points in strategy. Bernstein Theatres co-operated with Boorman.

This enterprise is typical of one of England's most up-to-date papers, and almost the only local which can beat Beaverbrook in its own territory for fast journalism. It is also a reminder of what may happen if the theatres fall down on the supply of significant news-reels.

## Griffith Shocks Modern New York

D. W. Griffith's *Intolerance*, made in 1916, was recently shown to the members of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library. Old-stage movie fans will remember that the film is based on four historical themes of intolerance, each one ending in disaster. But Griffith's treatment of the Crucifixion, the Fall of Babylon and the Massacre of St. Bartholomew shocked its select New York audience. Dowagers are said to have squirmed under the more bloody moments, while the beheading scene in Elmo Lincoln's *Man of Valour* sequence provoked a yelp of horror. The directorate are now faced with the delicate problem of protecting their polite audience from the stronger scenes of the great directors of the past.

Concurrently, a New York department-store has begun to use early movies to attract customers to the counters. A trial programme, presented free in the store, included *Infatuation*, with Gaby Deslys (1915), *Blue Waters*, with Norma Shearer (1921), and *Journeys through Filmland*, showing glimpses of the Talmadge sisters, Gloria Swanson and Thomas Meighan. So successful was the first programme, that the store continued the shows with nineteenth-century news-reels.

*From Griffith's "Birth of a Nation": the assassination of Abraham Lincoln by Edwin Booth. This was one of the first epics.*

In this country the London Film Society recently showed three pre-war films discovered by Alberto Cavalcanti in the markets of the Porte d'Italie, Paris. The titles were: *A Bunch of Violets* (melodrama of a workman and a modiste), *The Secrets of a Queen* (an incident in the private life of Marie Antoinette), and *Satan Finds Mischief* by Georges Meliès, French pioneer of trick photography. The brilliant ingenuity of Meliès' 1904 trick-work stole the laurels from the modern films in the programme.

# CO-ORDINATE BRAINS FOR NEWS-REEL says SANGER

## "Evolution of Commentary is a Thrilling Business."

Gerald Sanger, *Producer of Fox Movietone News, has built up one of the most progressive units in the country.*

Arising out of the popular debunking of natural sound as a fetish, and out of a popular desire to see more in a news-reel than four or five subjects, commentary began to become general, primarily as a method of shortening subjects. This may seem a fallacious explanation, but it was the true reason for the advent of the commentator. Prove it by imagining the modern 40-ft. subject presented without commentary; it would have to run 120 ft. and be preceded by a title of 15 ft.!

The commentator, having arrived as a convenience, has been able to justify himself by his merits. Again, it is only necessary to look back a few months to realise how he dominates the present-day news-reel. The study of commentary is engrossing lively minds in the make-up theatre. Camera-work and cutting are comparatively well-known sciences; commentary is still rather an unexplored art, and its evolution is quite a thrilling business.

The commentary writer has to be something of a playwright; the commentator something of an actor. The first two requirements of the latter are that he or she should be free from vocal mannerisms and be able to talk fast without the appearance of hurry. After that, it is a question of individuality.

The orthodox practice among news-reels is to have a single commentator, who writes his own commentary. The unorthodox practice is to have a number of commentators, who may or may not write their own commentary.

There is nothing more false in a commentator not speaking his own composition than in an actor not speaking his own lines. The production of a news-reel nowadays is a complex task, and the more brains brought to it the better the result, if properly co-ordinated.

Commentary is, of course, very closely allied to cutting; and it is a controversial question whether negative should first be cut and commentary written to the cut subject, or commentary written first and negative cut to the approved commentary.

As an advocate of the commentary factor, I believe in drafting a commentary along lines agreed with the cutter, and adjusting later either the subject or commentary, as the editor decides.

The necessary co-operation of cutter and commentary-writer is itself a reason for the existence of the latter distinct from the commentator, where a news-reel uses several voices.

My faith in the multiple-voice formula is based on a diversity not only vocal, but in subject treatment. Different voices enable adjacent subjects to be treated with levity and dignity without the former detracting from the latter. The system facilitates the introduction of speed and humour without disparaging authority. It offers scope and potentialities for future development; and in this restless industry that is a very important aspect.

### NEWS-REELS VERSUS THE CENSOR

**While the newspaper press in France is free to write about political events, news-reels are no longer allowed to report without censorship.**

**Following the parliamentary debate held after the attack on the Socialist leader, Leon Blum, strict censorship is being put on film reports.**

**Shipments have been held up at the Customs, and even shots, taken by an amateur on the Blum incident for private purposes, have been confiscated.**


## THE FILM AND PHOTO LEAGUE

*invites the co-operation of men and women who desire to produce pictures dealing with the real life and aspirations of the vast mass of British citizens today. The league aims at producing films and photographs of social and cultural value; and at co-ordinating the activities of individuals and organisations sympathetic to these aims. It also organises lectures, debates, shows, etc., among its activities. Join us—our new address is*

4a PARTON STREET, RED LION SQUARE, W.C.1


## Travel Talks

James A. Fitzpatrick, the man responsible for the Fitzpatrick Travel Talks, is on a world cruise making two film features for M.G.M. One is to be a full-length travel film in colour with commentary in five different languages. The other will be a story-film in black-and-white.

In the last six months M.G.M. have distributed the following Fitzpatrick Travel Talks:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Switzerland* | Black-and-white. |
| *Tibet, Land of Isolation* | Black-and-white. |
| *Italy, Land of Inspiration* | Black-and-white. |
| *Scotland, the Bonnie* | Black-and-white. |
| *British Guiana* | Black-and-white. |
| *Africa, Land of Contrast* | Black-and-white. |
| *Citadels of the Mediterranean* | Black-and-white. |
| *Historic Mexico City* | Technicolor. |
| *Los Angeles, Wonder Country of the West* | Technicolor. |
| *Colourful Guatemala* | Technicolor. |
| *Zeeland, the Lost Paradise* | Technicolor. |
| *Ireland, the Emerald Isle* | Technicolor. |

## Public to Gauge Film Values

SIDNEY BERNSTEIN'S famous questionnaire goes out again this month. It will ask the members of his audiences in eighteen theatres what stars, pictures, directors, types of film and programme they prefer. A quarter of a million questionnaires will be issued, and half of them will be returned. They will tell us the taste of Suburbia.

The results we expect will not differ greatly from last year, except in the names of the stars of the moment. Some stars will be up, some down. But thriller-adventure, musical-comedy and comedy will still be preferred by the men, and musical comedy and society drama will be preferred by the women. Comedy will continue to be low on the female list. Tom Walls will be high in the list of directors, and Pabst and Pudovkin, if they are remembered at all, will be at the bottom.

We are not specially concerned with Mr. Bernstein's gentle conclusions. He is a business man and will serve the majority, and serve it well. But remembering the record of previous years, we draw attention to one item which will just as certainly repeat itself. There will be represented a 15 per cent minority which has a mind for one-feature programmes and a taste for shorts. Mr. Bernstein, following the majority, will continue to ignore it.

All over the country there is this 15 per cent minority and, this year, it may even have crept to 16 or 17. It does not represent the multi-millions of cinema, but it still represents an audience of millions.

Who is organising to meet its taste? There is the Academy and its imitators, and the Tatler and its imitators; there are the film societies and the non-theatrical circuits. Are they exhausting the possibilities? And is Mr. Bernstein right in discarding in his exhibition plans 15 per cent of the British people? It is, when you consider it, a large minority. (Ed. *W.F.N.*)

# SOUND MOVES AHEAD MORE MUSICAL MUSIC

An improved sound-recording technique which the Radio Corporation of America has evolved may re-introduce to the screen some of the performers who went out when the talkies came in, because their voices had that shrill timbre which has hitherto been fatal to successful recording.

The fundamental cause of the difficulty has been that all photographic images, of whatsoever sort, have lacked the degree of precision required in recording high-frequency sound waves. The sound-image makes far more exacting demands than the picture-image, in spite of the latter's enormous magnification on the screen.

Two important causes of imperfection are the tendency of white light to break up in a lens into rays of different colours which all come to a focus at different points according to their wave-lengths, and the tendency of those with short rays to penetrate the film and reflect back again.

The new technique consists in using only long rays—the ultra-violet—for making the sound-track photograph. The rest are filtered out. In this way finer detail is achieved in the sound-image, which, if the theatres are sufficiently well-equipped to make full use of this improvement, will result in more natural speech and more musical music.

## VISUAL OUSTED BY SOUND TRACK

What may happen when the sound-track runs away with the picture was made alarmingly clear at a lecture given to the New York branch of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers recently.

Under the title of "Visual Accompaniment," three forms of film were described, in which the picture humbly aims at providing you with something appropriate to look at while you listen to the music on the sound-track.

### LANDSCAPES IN COLOUR

The first type simply consisted of a series of appropriate landscapes in colour. It was, in fact, a sort of crazy travel film where the scenery evoked the music, instead of the usual opposite arrangement.

### THE SAVAGE METHOD

The second raised false hopes. It was called the "Savage" method. But this, it turned out, was just a tribute to a Mr. Eugene Savage, its inventor.

In brief, it merely consisted in substituting painted landscapes, slid along on several layers of celluloid, for real ones. Such a method must naturally stand or fall by the sort of landscape that gets on to the celluloid, so one is glad to have a description of the accompaniment made for the Unfinished Symphony.

"At the opening chords we are led into a gracious and beautiful world of mountain heights and castles, mirrored in the depths of a river, which is seen beyond a sculptured balustrade and varied foliage. With the romantic love motif, two figures appear seated under a spreading tree by the water's edge. . . . A sudden storm overwhelms the scene—the man stands by the sea gazing at the heights as though challenged by them.

"Two Muses move across the face of the moon above him, encouraging his aspirations. The scenery changes to one of sheer barren heights. . . . The ascending vapours carry his last aspirations heavenward. The Muses gather over him in the vapour, and with the brusque chords

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of the closing music take him with them upward and out of the picture." And that's that.

### RHYTHMICAL PULSATION

A third method is to obtain rhythmical pulsations of abstract form in time with the music by fiddling with three "dimmers" controlling the light from three slide projectors, which superimpose their images on a single screen. One might come to welcome this sort after prolonged indulgence in symbolical landscape.

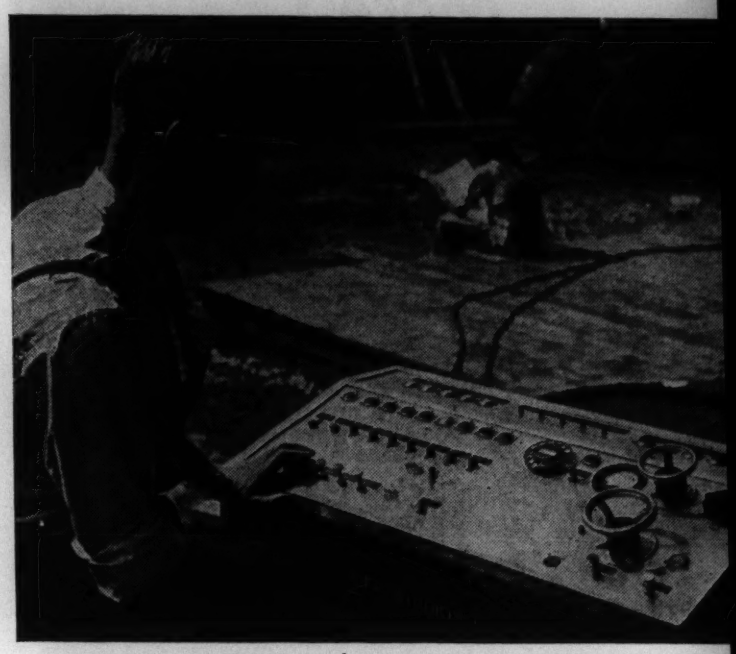
But if the Americans think that these three methods exhaust the possibilities of Visual Accompaniment, we in this country are in a position to give them the Lye.

### FILM INSTITUTE GOES TECHNICAL

The British Film Institute is opening a technical department. This department will deal with the ever-increasing flow of technical enquiries which reach the Institute, and will undertake any research into non-theatrical projection questions likely to be of use to educationists.

The National Film Library will also be run, and a small theatre is being equipped for 35 mm. and 16 mm., silent and sound.

**ROBOT SWITCHBOARD**



# Portable Organ Has Extensive Repertoire

**Great economy in time and trouble can be effected by centralised electrical control over the highly complex mechanical equipment of the modern studio.**

The instrument shown in the accompanying illustration is, in fact, a switchboard at the A.T.P. Studios, which has reached such an advanced stage of development that it prefers to be referred to as a "portable organ." However, the harmonies which its stops produce are not musical but practical. They ensure the right things happening at the right moment in the right order and in the most expeditious manner.

Its repertoire is extremely extensive, for it signals to the electricians for lighting, gives the "ready" to the director, rings the silence bell, lights up silence signs, locks the doors, starts both picture-cameras and sound-cameras (flashing on identification marks, which dispense with the need for clappers), and also controls the ventilation, heating and air-conditioning, and the huge sliding, sound-proof doors, 14 feet wide and 18 feet high.

Mr. Double, the designer of this astonishing instrument, kindly played to the representative of *W.F.N.* a short improvisation on its keys, which produced a visibly soothing effect on some highly-strung artistes who happened at the time to be rehearsing on the set.

### COLOUR PROCESSES DEFINED

*Additive processes:* those processes in which the different colours are placed *side by side* on the film. Some additive processes record each dominant colour on a separate frame of film; others place minute particles of the dominant colours side by side on a single frame.

*Subtractive processes:* those processes in which the colours are placed *one behind the other* on the film. All methods based on a subtractive process reproduce the dominant colours by means of several layers of dyed emulsion on the film.

## FILM SOCIETIES

# More Co-operation Needed

### CENTRALIZATION AND BOOKING PROBLEMS DISCUSSED

*by Thorold Dickinson*

**In the first issue of "W.F.N." it is stated that the many film societies throughout the country are working independently and intensively towards the organisation of the critical section among the film public, in order to influence the future development of cinema.**

This is the true and sad state of affairs that exists to-day. Disinterested co-operation is practically non-existent. It is possible nowadays for anyone in a provincial town, who has some leisure, energy and organising ability, to shine as a local light by running a film society and posing as the local authority on intelligent cinema. He can, but he need not, affiliate with the British Film Institute. If he does not, he gains more kudos as an independent authority. He can, but he need not, join the Federation of Film Societies and enjoy the benefits of the Federation at the small annual rate of 1½ per cent of his society's revenue. He can make friends with the London Film Society, and take advantage of the constitution of that pioneer body.

Now the secretary of the London Film Society, itself a non-profit-making, renting organisation, is also the secretary of the Federation. This is reasonable, for the work of the former does in fact cover much of the ground of the Federation. But even if all the seventeen societies which comprise the Federation were to pay their dues regularly, the revenue would still not pay for the amount of work involved in carrying out the best interests of the Federation.

**Problem of Theatres**

It is obvious that the London Film Society is at a disadvantage owing to the presence in London of these specialised theatres, whose existence depends on the interest of audiences stimulated originally by the foundation and success of the London Society. The existence of these theatres is regarded by some people as a reason for closing down the London Film Society, but the management of these theatres would regard such a proposal as disastrous, for progress and the airing of advanced views is the life-blood of the articulate film audience, and the experimental work achieved by the London Film Society eases the problems of the specialised theatres, and this, incidentally, helps the provincial societies as well.

The present system is obviously wrong, because of the lack of co-operation between the provincial and the London societies. The specialised theatres import intelligent entertainment, but the exclusive field of the film society movement lies in study and experiment. At present the council of the London society choose their imports with more or less success, while the provincial societies send representatives to the London Society's performances and choose or reject as they please, without a hint of co-operation with the pioneer organisation. Naturally, the provincial societies cannot be forced to accept product, booked blind, as we say in the trade.

The fault lies in the Federation. This body should elect an active booking committee, composed of persons of taste who are available to view new films in London at short notice, and to choose for revival, subjects which have passed out of circulation, and of which a special copy has to be printed. The committee should be empowered to guarantee the financial support of their respective societies for the films chosen.

**Towards Greater Security**

If only four films were so circulated per season, the burden on the London Society would be eased considerably, and the Federation would enjoy an increased responsibility and a greater security than exists at present. The London Society would then have a greater definite return to offer its clients on the continent on the Federation's behalf, and this would strengthen its resources in the selection of its four remaining programmes in the season. The remaining provincial programmes would have these films to select from as well as the products of the specialised theatres.

*This still shows Andreiev's design for a set for "The Beloved Vagabond"*

*and this one how the producer carried out Adreiev's ideas*

## TYNESIDE SOCIETY SHOWS ART DIRECTORS' WORK

**A collection of drawings, illustrating the work of the art-directors, Vincent Korda and Andre Andreiev, have recently been exhibited by the Tyneside Film Society in Newcastle.**

Andre Andreiev, born in St. Petersburg, and trained at the Academy of Arts, found himself at the age of twenty-one in the exacting position of Art-Director to the famous Moscow Art Theatre. This was just before the Russian Revolution. He continued to work at this post until the Revolution, when he fled to Germany.

Within a year or two, he became one of the most sought-after set-designers in Berlin: both for the stage and the cinema. Since then, his reputation has become international with films like *Raskolnikov*, *Therese Racquin*, *Drei Groschen Oper*, *The Last Company*, and *Volga-Volga*.

He is a comparative newcomer in England. His first film here was *The Dictator* last year. His latest work was on the Toeplitz film, *The Beloved Vagabond*, recently filmed at Ealing and due for release shortly.

Vincent Korda, London Film Productions' Art-Director and younger brother of Alexander Korda, designed the sets for *The Private Life of Henry VIII*, *Catherine the Great*, *The Private Life of Don Juan*, *The Ghost Goes West*, *Things to Come* and the *Scarlet Pimpernel*.

In 1935 his work was shown in the Exhibition of Hungarian Painters, London.

# FILMING THE GOSPEL A DANGEROUS POLICY

## *by John Grierson*

**The churches are stirring to the use of films, and will presently, as the discussion warms, raise a prettier problem of religious policy than has struck the churches since the quarrel over transubstantiation. But I expect the roles will be reversed. The Roman Catholic Church will hold that you cannot turn the life of Christ into the substance of film. The Methodists will have no such compunction in giving us the reality. The horrid little pictures on the Sunday-school texts will come to life.**

**As a Scotsman, I hope the Church of Scotland will take its stand with Rome against this imminent vulgarisation of the Gospel.**

I have seen these pictures of Jesus. Ten years ago in America I reviewed a batch of them for a New York paper, and wrote one of the rudest articles of my life: and no wonder. If I did not head it "Jesus in a Nightgown" I should have done, for the preposterous array of nightgowns, wigs and false beards was a travesty of every reality the Gospels could possibly intend.

The films were well-meant and were, in fact, produced with the full authority of very good church people in the States. But a fundamental mistake had been made. This "Life" which, by imaginative teaching and preaching, has come to call up every depth of association, was presented *tout simple* as a costume drama: crooks, sheep and Palestinian backcloths complete.

If I remember rightly, I drew some attention to the fact that when you present miracles on the screen you are only doing what every film wizard from Mèlies onward has done more brilliantly already. Water into wine is a simple camera trick. The Raising of Lazarus may be safely left to the second assistant cameraman. The very worst aspect of these American films was that they turned Jesus into a sleight-of-hand merchant.

I put these points crudely because I am disturbed at this new church activity. I am afraid that, however sound the Methodists may be in their intentions, they will perpetrate the same ghastly mistake. I was astounded, and even affected, at the reception which my New York article got in America. I thought it would shock every religious susceptibility.

Instead of that, it was repeated in various parts of America. I got letters from all over, standing with me in my proposal that, in the name of religion, these lives of Christ should be burned in the public square. But I did not participate in an even more violent reaction which appeared from the Middle West. In the Bible belt the Ku Klux Klan stepped in and banned the film because Jesus had been cast as a Jew.

Here is the problem upon us now. The Archbishop of Canterbury forms an advisory council with film members in John Maxwell and F. W. Baker. The Church of Scotland, at a meeting of the Scottish Churches' Film Guild, forms another committee to report on the possibilities of production. Fearful mention is made by one enthusiastic minister of "exploiting literary-minded ministers" and "using the valuable assistance of the many amateur dramatic societies" in producing the whole history of the Church. One already fears the worst.

The Methodist Church, in a recent, very thorough discussion of the problem from all angles, also gives its emphasis to a dramatic presentation of Gospel themes. "The Gospel in pictures will make a similar appeal to the Gospel in song." "An analysis of objects as shown by the pioneers suggests these three distinct purposes: *first*, an actual presentation of the evangelical Gospel." Shades of de Mille, are we to have these saccharine upliftings and exhibitionist pursuit of gleams all over again?

One can imagine it from the words of the Rev. W. H. Lax. Speaking not too diffidently of his first appearance in a religious film, he says: "People who have seen it say that they miss the Lax smile and the Lax gesture." If that is the way it goes, may the churches preserve us from both.

But lest I appear too negative in saying " 'ware acting, 'ware these Gospel stories in film," let me record how sensible some of the suggestions have been. A particularly pleasing thought is that the ministers in Edinburgh applauded when someone spoke of their boring missionary films. Boring and incompetent they are, every one I have seen. A very considerable emphasis, too, has been given in the discussion to the possibility of using films in educational and social work.

Here, I believe, in all practical and, I hope, ecclesiastical good sense, is the real beginning. I suggest to the churches bluntly that they cannot take pictures into the church service without great danger of cheapening what virtue it retains. But social service is something one may bite on and finance and do well. Even now films are available on housing and health, and kindred matters, which permit a start.

As I see it, the future of films in the church is a much more simple and straightforward matter than the more melodramatic evangelist is likely to realise. It will be quietly and efficiently and persistently in the church halls, and not in the staggering shadow of the altar. It will be in the discussion groups of the church societies and in the simple service of community needs.

I hope I shall not be accused of belittling the churches if I suggest it may more readily be in teaching cookery and child welfare to the women, and hiking to the boys, and good housing to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners than (in consummate wickedness) bedazzling poor morons into the fears and trivialities of "salvation."

The churches represent still the greatest community organisation in the country and, for large sections of the populace, the only community centres in which civic welfare can be promoted and citizenship made imaginative and real. That is the churches' opportunity. Let them use it. It may bring some of the lost millions back to the church. It may even bring the churches back to the community life.

Have the churches forgotten?

# MUSIC AND FILM

## Illustration or Creation ?

## by Hans Eisler

**Hans Eisler, Professor of music at the New School for Social Research, New York, is in England for a few months to arrange the music for *Pagliacci*, a Capitol Film production.**

In 1927 the manager of the small and unknown Triergon Company asked Paul Hindemith and myself to compose a small film for the Music Festival in Baden Baden.

In those days sound-recording apparatus was still very primitive. I remember very well indeed how Masolle, one of the inventors of the Tobis System, exhorted me, in a paternal manner, to avoid certain musical phrases. "Barring this," he added, "you can do what you like to 'underline' all 'rhythms.' " In an abstract film by Ruttmann, Hindemith composed a musical background to *Felix the Cat*, and the "underlining" of the rhythm of the film brought forth an excellent humorous effect.

Considering the state in which film music was at this period, a film composer was considered clever and useful if he understood how to "illustrate" the happenings on the screen with music. If a machine was shown on the screen the music had to whirr, if a man was walking along a street the music had to walk, etc. This principle of illustrating was supplemented by "sentimental" and "picturesque" music. The "sentimental" was used to make the sorrow of a lover still more sorrowful by means of adequate music. The "picturesque" were those horrible musical pieces which when green pastures were shown fell into detestable sobbing, or became angry to suggest the roaring sea.

**Mute and Sound Combined**

In 1930 I worked with Granovsky on his film, *Song of Life*. The birth of a child was shown, and the picture of the baby was accompanied by a ballad which depicted all the things which were waiting for the child. This tempted Granovsky to show the same things in the film as well. Music and film depicting the horrors of this world resulted in a combination of picture and sound which at that time created much interest. It was fundamentally different from the method in which songs were usually introduced into films.

In the same year I was working together with Victor Trivas on the film, *War is Hell*. Of the instances in which we succeeded to employ music and picture in an original way, I would like to quote only one: the beginning of the war. A workman says good-bye to wife and child—on the way to the barracks we see depressed men accompanied by their wives. Martial music starts very softly, gradually increasing until it reaches a fortissimo. While this music is played good-natured and anxious men turn into ferocious warriors.

In the film *Kuhle-Wampe*, directed by Dudow, dwellings of poor people were shown. These very quiet pictures were counterpointed with extremely energetic and stimulating music, which suggested not only pity with the poor, but at the same time provoked protest against such a state of affairs.

PAGE FOR

# AMATEURS

NORMAN McLAREN

## Glasgow Amateurs Plan Production

Norman McLaren, whose *Colour Cocktail* won the *W.F.N.* prize at the Scottish Amateur Film Festival, made a film while on a visit to Russia.

When edited, the film will deal somewhat briefly with the architectural reconstruction of cities in the Soviet Union, and more particularly with the Ten-year Plan for the reconstruction of Moscow. The aim of the film is to show how Moscow city is being planned as a complete unit, and how the form of the new Moscow will reflect the social structure of its inhabitants.

At the moment he is working on the scenarios of four one-reel 16-mm. films. The first, *Homes versus Health*, will point out the influence of slum environment and low income on juvenile health, and its relation to the occurrence of tuberculosis.

The second will deal with the raising of the school-leaving age, and will emphasise the economic factors which produce entirely different attitudes to school and education in the middle-class and working-class child.

*Colonial Expansion* will show the geographical spread and development of colonies by the main industrial powers. With the use of ciné-diagrams and animated symbols, the period from 1500 to 1936 will be covered. Maps and charts will be shot on Kodachrome film.

The fourth, a film on diet, health and income, will also be shot in colour, and animated objects, charts and statistics will be used. Much of the information has been taken from *Diet, Health and Income*, the recent and widely-publicised book by Sir John Orr.

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There are 36 film-workers' unions in Mexico. They have combined to urge the government to make the world Mexican film-conscious.

In 1932, Mexico produced 4 films; in 1934, 27; and in 1935, approximately 50.

# 16-mm. Confusion Ended S.M.P.E. Official Standard

**The vexed question of standard specifications for 16-mm. sound-projectors and prints in this country has at length been settled by arbitration. Since 1933, two different sets of specifications have existed, the S.M.P.E. (American) standard, and the D.I.N. (German) standard.**

**The British Standards Institution, under the chairmanship of Lord Riverdale, have announced their decision in favour of the S.M.P.E. standard. The opposing standards were submitted to the Institution for arbitration with Mr. F. A. Hoare (Western Electric) presenting the S.M.P.E. case, and Mr. H. Bruce Woolfe (G.B. Equipments) representing D.I.N.**

The B.S.I. decision reverses the recommendations of the British Film Institute and the International Institute of Educational Cinematography at Rome. Both these bodies had advised the adoption of the D.I.N. standard in Great Britain. It was felt at the time that they had bowed too early to superior pressure on the part of the D.I.N. people.

### CONFUSION OF TWO STANDARDS

The existence of the two standards side-by-side resulted from one of the most notorious misunderstandings in movie history. In November 1932, *The Journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers* published American specifications for 16-mm. sound-film standards. The drawings contained the word "title" so placed as to show that the sound-track, when seen from the projector light-source, was on the left of the film, and that the base, as opposed to the emulsion, faced the light-source.

In April 1933, *Die Kinotechnik* published the equivalent German specifications, known as the D.I.N. standard. All dimensions coincided with the S.M.P.E. standard, but a note in the text explained that the sound-track, when seen from the light-source, lay to the right of the film and that the emulsion faced the light-source.

Thus the two sets of standards differed as regards the position of the sound-track and the placing of the film in the projector gate. But neither the American nor the German engineers spotted the discrepancy until seven months later.

In November 1933, American 16-mm. sound-films went to Paris for the International Motion Picture Exposition. It was discovered that they could not be run in the D.I.N. projectors.

### D.I.N. ENDORSED IN EUROPE

In June 1934, Dr. De Feo, of the I.I.E.C., called a conference at Stresa "to determine 16-mm. sound-film standards for the educational field." By a curious oversight, the cable inviting a delegate from the S.M.P.E. reached America only two days before the conference. The S.M.P.E. hastily appointed as delegate an American resident in Europe, but there was no time to give him the proper instructions. The conference endorsed the D.I.N. standard for European use, with the American dissenting.

Another conference took place in Berlin in April 1935, under the auspices of the Reichsfilmkammer (the Nazi State film organisation). A special committee on the "International Standardisation of Narrow Gauge Film" would not permit open discussion. They informed the S.M.P.E. delegate that the Stresa conference had already decided in favour of D.I.N.

Since then, 16-mm. sound projectors employing the two differing standards have appeared on the market, causing hesitation and confusion on the part of potential buyers in the educational field. The original mistake and its confirmation by the I.I.E.C. have probably kept back 16-mm. sound for two full years.

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### SEA-HORSES

**From a Film by Jean Painlevé recently shown at London Film Society**


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DIRECTOR—FRED PULLIN

FILM EDITORIAL SERVICE

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# PUBLIC RELATIONS

**THE WAR OFFICE** has recently been preparing a pamphlet of instructions on what the public are to do in the case of air raids. It will be shot out in millions to the country's householders. Many authorities on propaganda are said to have been consulted, and the pamphlet is reported to be a masterpiece of simple instruction.

It is proposed to produce a film to supplement the effect of the pamphlet in all the country's theatres. The principal companies have all offered to co-operate, but it is believed that the choice of producer and the desire of circuits for exclusive runs have delayed the proposal.

* * *

**DONALD FINDLAY,** the enterprising publicity idea-man of **DERRY AND TOMS,** has, as a result of assiduous attendance at the Film Society, introduced Lotte Reiniger to window-dressing. Her silhouettes now light up the spring fashion displays in Kensington High Street.

Findlay is an Australian, and apt to quote Australian progressiveness when the salesmen at Derry and Toms insist on crowding the windows. Reiniger's silhouettes have, in fact, to be searched for in the cluttered display of frills, modes and furbelows. But even this progress in a Derry and Toms window is sensational. Barker's follow on with more Reiniger.

* * *

**A. G. HIGHET,** Assistant Controller, Public Relations, at the **POST OFFICE,** has initiated a new use of film at the Ideal Homes Exhibition. He has combined living lecture and film, but not in the ordinary way of having the lecturer speak to the screen.

Lecture episode and film episode alternate, the lecturer striking a general note, the film following with a dramatic episode in illustration or complement. The technique has only been roughed out in Highet's first example. It will bear even stronger dramatisation of the film episode and a sharper isolation from the lecturer.

Highet now proposes to record the lecturer's voice on blank, cut it in with the film episode, and circulate the whole as a first lecture film in the new technique.

**PUBLICITY FILMS** have begun production on the first British documentary to be made in Technicolor. The film is sponsored by Cadbury Bros. It deals with the life and industries of Trinidad, with particular emphasis on the cocoa harvest. A. R. Taylor is supervising the production, with Ray Rannahan (who shot *Becky Sharp* and *Trail of the Lonesome Pine*) as cameraman.

* * *

**THE KING EDWARD'S HOSPITAL FUND** is cooperating with G.B.I. in the planning of a film on the rise of the voluntary hospital system in this country. A committee composed of Sir D'Arcy Power, Major Phillips and Dr. Malcolm will act as liaison between the Fund and the producers.

* * *

**DUNLOP RUBBER** are sponsoring a film tracing the development of the wheel. The film is to be built round a series of dramatised episodes in which actual historical vehicles are used. They include a velocipede, a bone-shaker, a stage-coach and a pennyfarthing bicycle.

Ralph Smart is producing for Publicity Films. The film is designed to advertise the Dunlop "90" tyre.

* * *

**BEHIND** *The Birth of the Robot*, which is shown on this page, is the figure of **JACK BEDDINGTON,** publicity officer for **SHELL.** Beddington has just returned from New York where, for some months, he has been helping the American organisation with English ideas. He is one of the leading publicity officers of the modern school, with an intimate knowledge of art and artists and an effective conception of how they can be used in advertising.

Beddington has carried his progressive ideas into the use of film. He encouraged Maurice Beck in an early documentary film of London River. He promoted Rotha's *Contact*, and stood by the picture when Wardour Street doubted it. He co-operated with Elton in one of his most successful films of machinery, *The Diesel Engine*. He has now gone the whole hog with the *avant garde* with Len Lye's latest in colour. He deserves its success.

# SHELL'S ROBOT IN COLOUR

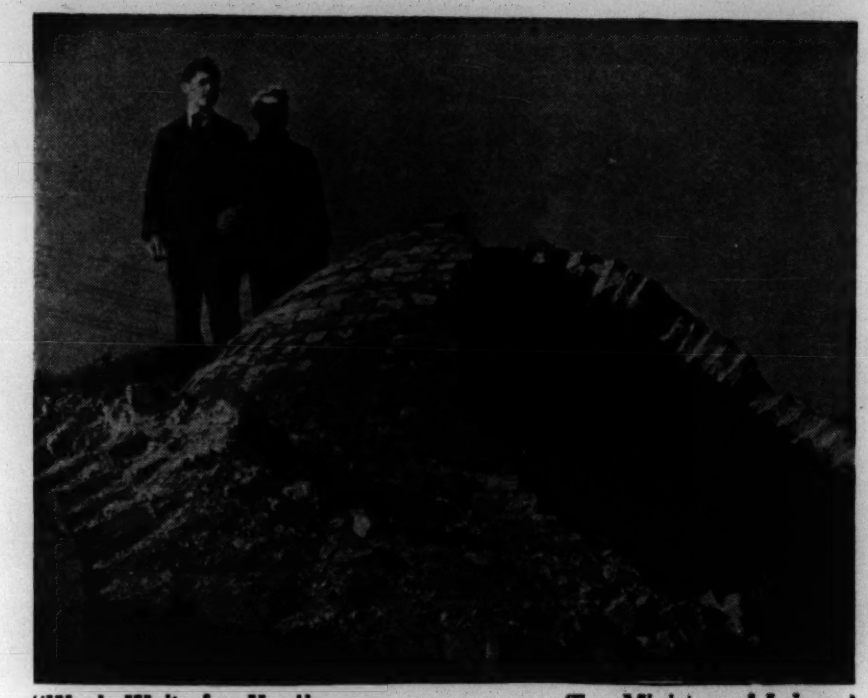
*The Birth of the Robot*, produced in Gaspar-color by Humphrey Jennings and Len Lye for Shell-Mex, will lead a new movement in colour production.

This 600-foot film represents the first serious British effort at colour animation. It is an unqualified success. Its boldness of experiment and excellent animation will make it the meat of every film society in the country. Its superb colour and high production polish will recommend it to specialist exhibitors in spite of its publicity sponsorship.

A formidable roster of experts contributed to the making of the film. In addition to Jennings and Lye, who were responsible for the direction and animation, the production staff included C. H. Dand (script), John Banting and Alan Farmer (design and construction of models), Alex Strasser (camera man) and Jack Ellitt (sound-charting and cutting). The music of the film is from Gustav Holst's *Planets* suite.

W. H. SMITH'S BOOKSTALLS SELL World Film News

# DOCUMENTARY FILMS



"Work Waits for You" (For Ministry of Labour)
By Alexander Shaw

**Director of Productions**
**PAUL ROTHA**

All directors employed by this Company are members of the Associated Realist Film Producers—an independent group representative of the leading documentary film makers in Great Britain

**Managing Director**
**DONALD F. TAYLOR**

"Stand by for Work" (For Ministry of Labour)
By Edgar Anstey

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# THE WORLD IS FITZPATRICK'S COOKIE

## *Isaac James discusses THE KAVA KAVA SCHOOL OF TRAVELOGUE*

**"Pay your sixpence and see the world! Step right up, Ladies and Gentlemen, and examine the glories and splendours of foreign nations for no more than the cost of a glass of beer!"**

**This was the enticing offer that lured the suspicious customers into the Cinematograph Parlours of the early 1900's. These primitive movie fans, bent over their peep machines, were enraptured at the sight of a carriage drawing past the Eiffel Tower, or a tourist skirting the gardens of the Taj Mahal. Travel in those days was a means of escape reserved for the very wealthy, or the young man who went to sea. Films, on the other hand, provided an escape from the economic requirements of travel. Glamour, romance, exotic charms were promised by those flickering pictures. They were the shortest way out of Battersea.**

In the thirty years of film history that have been written since those visionaries discussed "possibilities," the travel film sinks lower and lower on each page. True, it is occasionally used to augment the usual geography syllabus; we recognise the outline of New York's skyline much more quickly than we do a panorama of Liverpool, and we can tell the difference, vaguely, between a Tibetan and Melanesian. But somehow the "possibilities" were never realised; and to-day the promises are no longer made, not even by press agents.

In the Wardour Streets of the world the travel film is now contemptuously known as a "filler." It can be relied upon to keep the customers in their seats during the few minutes between Mickey Mouse and Myrna Loy; even though it cannot keep them from coughing and opening candy boxes.

The apparent causes for this decline of public interest in the travel picture are worth examining, because they are implicated in larger and more important film problems. Obviously, our desire to know more about the remote peoples and the places they inhabit has not lessened. Most Englishmen and Americans leap at every chance to go abroad. The tourist agencies of both countries are flourishing while the landlords are bewailing the depression. It would seem that the public wants to do its own travelling; and that desire may well be considered a devastating criticism of those who have been doing their travelling for them.

### HIGH-SPEED METHODS

The largest and most pretentious organisation now producing in the travel field is a division of the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Company. It is headed by Fitzpatrick, whose name is featured on every reel, and who personally supervises and works on every subject. The world is Fitzpatrick's cookie. No land, provided it is on the route of a commercial tourist company, is protected from his camera.

In recent years it has been his custom to book passage on one of Cunard's around-the-world-cruises, and while the natives of the various exotic ports do their little scenes for the culture-hungry and high-tipping tourists, Fitzpatrick records the scenes for posterity and the masses. Of course an occasional tourist, who has read a book, will wander off from the group and see something of the port itself, but Fitzpatrick hasn't time for such diversions, tripods being what they are to set up, and sunlight being such a furtive ally.

This high-speed, cover-the-world method of making travelogues has perhaps more imitators than all the others. We might call it the post-card school of motion-picture production. For never do these reels contain a single frame that would not be eminently suitable for sending back to Aunt Mary to let her know what a good time we are having, and how we wished she was here.

All of the dullest movements, the most obvious native activities, the most glaring contrasts of "old and new," the fakiest and most moth-eaten folk ways are carefully photographed and presented as dramatic material.

The post-card school invariably has a stamp that authenticates its classification. During the last loving shot of the port, carefully framed by two palm leaves or a ship's life-preserver, you will hear the narrator's dulcet voice croon these words, "And so with mournful heart, we bid farewell to Kava Kava, but not for long, for we who have tasted the pleasures of this sun-kissed Garden of Eden know that some day we must return for a more substantial repast. Au revoir, Kava Kava!" The stamp is usually cancelled out by the yawns of the audience.

A system of travelogue production closely allied to the above is one that I affectionately think of as the art-study school. Most out-door film companies have at one time or another contributed little masterpieces to the vaults of this mythical institution. Their subject-matter is identical with that of the other group. The resulting difference is largely one of technique; for instead of making lovely pictures, these ambitious craftsmen strive after the unmitigated "beautiful." They are addicted to an extensive use of filters, and have a fearful ability to think up new camera angles.

The individual shots, if somewhat confusing, are always dramatic; sky is apt to be jet black, and the sand a rich silver grey; the close-up of the farmer's head usually looms so large on the screen that we feel we know more about the farmer's skin condition than his wife does. Such filmic treatment is likely to provide extremely intimate shots of the stone decoration of a sky-scraper and thrilling views from the fifty-second floor, but the simple person who wants to know what the skyscraper looks like is apt to be disappointed.

The simple person would certainly forgo his curiosity, however, if he only knew how much good the production of the art-study travelogue did to the ego of the film director. It's such fun to get away from dull commercial films that everybody can understand.

**In the next issue, Isaac James will discuss Newman, "The Magic Carpet" series, the Martin Johnsons, etc.**

## ROBERT J. FLAHERTY IN INDIA

A PHOTO-MONTAGE FROM *ELEPHANT BOY*

# What do Documentaries Cost?

## Figures on Recent Films

**How much do films like "Weather Forecast," "Contact," "B.B.C.," and "The Voice of Britain" cost? Here is a field of production which is interesting Government departments, public utility companies and industrial organisations. Production is inhibited because most of them are ignorant of the finances involved, and are afraid to trust the estimates of production companies.**

**"W.F.N." herewith supplies an analysis of the essential costs of this type of production.**

Distinguish first the less-ambitious class of documentary. Basil Wright's West Indies films (*Cargo from Jamaica*, *Windmill in Barbados*, etc.), Shaw's films for the Orient (*Sea Change*, *Northern Summer*, etc.) and the G.P.O. non-theatrical films like *Air Post* are simple films—straight exteriors, no expensive lighting for interiors, no big set scenes, simple sound effects of commentary music, natural noise, etc. These films cost up to 10s. a foot. A one-reeler would not in the ordinary course cost more than £500.

Freak cases are *Granton Trawler*, *Fishing Banks of Skye* and *O'er Hill and Dale*. These films cost nearer £100 than £500. The explanation is that when you examine the shooting it is desperately simple. *Fishing Banks of Skye* was shot in one day, *Granton Trawler* in three days, *O'er Hill and Dale* in ten days. All the effects were got at the cutting bench. All were one-man shows, for the director acted as his own cameraman. The wastage of negative was trifling: fifteen hundred feet shot to one thousand feet finished film.

These are freak cases, and are not to be taken as a measure for more difficult subjects. You have different types of difficult subjects in *Weather Forecast*, *Contact*, *Face of Britain*, *Night Mail*, *Six-thirty Collection*, and *B.B.C.*

*Weather Forecast* involved shots taken from many locations, and similarly with *Contact* and *Face of Britain*. *Night Mail* involved night shooting, and expensive lighting crews, and a great deal of precise acting. *Six-thirty Collection* was entirely made in the interior of a sorting-office, and accommodation to the normal routine of the office made production slow.

*B.B.C.* from an organisational point of view was easily the most terrific undertaking documentary has ever faced. Production had to fit in with the very complex routine of the B.B.C.; illustrative shots had to be got from all over the country; the complex effects of sight (superimposition, etc.) involved a great deal of special laboratory work; the sound involved complex re-recording of music, sound, commentary, natural sound, recitative, etc.; there were many special sets and many actors.

The range of cost here is from 10s. to 30s. a foot, with *B.B.C.* at the top. *Weather Forecast* was an exceptional film. It set out as a simple pot-boiler, but by extreme economy in production (Evelyn Spice is the most economical director operating in England) was able to do much more than was called for on the schedule. It cost about 7s. 6d. a foot, but this figure is exceptional and cannot rank as a standard.

*Six-thirty Collection*, which looks simpler than *Weather Forecast*, cost more than twice as much. *Night Mail*, *Contact* and *Shipyard* rank, one would say, in the £1 a foot class. £1 a foot is, in other words, a good measure for ambitious work, but that measure varies according to the circumstance. Thirty shillings a foot for first-rate work by the best directors is not too much.

There should be no confusion between Class A the simple class of *O'er Hill and Dale*, and Class B, the complex class of *Night Mail* and *Shipyard*.

# NO-MAN'S-LAND OF FILM FINANCE

**"W.F.N." asked the production supervisor of one of the large companies to say what sums were required in the ordinary way for studio films. He raises an interesting problem, pointing out that films for second-feature showing must be produced within a narrow limit, and that films for first-feature showing must have expensive stars, who carry production figures to freak totals.**

**Between the two figures is the no-man's-land of film finance.**

Selling entertainment is mainly a matter of selling personalities. To sell a film as a first-feature, a producer must have a personality (or star) well enough known to induce the public to go to the particular theatres on whose screens that star is appearing. Such a star can demand and receive anything over £1,000 per week. But he also has his reputation to consider; so has the producer.

No star will hire himself to a producer who will not furnish him with an adequate story, supporting cast, director, technical staff and background. These, with studio and location work, will cost on an average, anything over £25,000. And so we reach the figure of £30,000 as the normal minimum cost of a first-feature film.

If a producer cannot afford that sum, he must aim at a second-feature production, for he cannot afford to hire a star, and therefore he cannot expect the general public to flock to his entertainment with no additional inducement on the programme. It has been generally established by experience that a second-feature film should not cost more than £15,000 and, if possible, not more than £12,000.

There is, therefore, a no-man's-land between £15,000 and £30,000 within which it is dangerous to trespass, unless abnormal conditions of economy in some departments make the hiring of a star possible within those limits. Sometimes, for instance, one or more stars will hire themselves co-operatively and agree to receive a percentage of the profits.

Productions costing more than £30,000 can roughly be scaled by the following means. The cost of the principal players should not be less than 25 per cent of the total cost of production, always remembering to hire those players as cheaply as possible. Productions costing more than £35,000 should have a strong potential appeal in more than one country.

The main danger in the present boom in film production in this country lies in the scarcity of screen personalities that will inevitably result from over-production. Certain stars are demanding double and treble the fees that they received a year ago. Some are worth the increase, many are not. But any increase should be assessed by box-office takings and not by competition among producers.


| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **DAVID GASCOIGNE** | - | *Man's Life is This Meat* - - | **3/6** |
| **DYLAN THOMAS** | - - | *18 Poems* - - - - | **3/6** |
| **GEORGE BARKER** | - - | *Preliminary Poems* - - - | **2/6** |

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# CARTOON COMES OF AGE FROM FILL-UP TO FEATURE

**Now that cartoon has taken its place in cinema programmes as a recognised and necessary feature, it is interesting to recall how they began.**

**Anson Dyer, author of the Sam cartoons, tells of their gradual evolution.**

In 1915 the hand of the cartoonist always appeared on the screen. It merely drew lightning caricatures of politicians and well-known people or comic animals.

Most of these drawings were outlined first of all in a faint blue, which did not register on the film. This gave accuracy and speed to the cartoonist during the actual shooting. The speed worked out at about ⅛ inch per frame.

From this method a new technique evolved, called "ghost drawing." The cartoonist's hand disappeared, and the pictures evolved on their own. This was the simple technique of one-turn one picture, ⅛ inch being added to the drawing between shots.

This effect was improved by showing a hand drawing on one side of the screen, while another figure evolved all by itself on the other side. Meanwhile, exact replicas of the characters had been made, so that when the cartoonist's hand passed across the screen, his original drawing was removed, and the replica was placed there instead. The replica figures could now be animated and carry on the plot.

**ANSON DYER at work**

*"'Alt 'oo goes theer?"*

In this way the public was nursed into accepting an animated cartoon without seeing the artist's hand at work.

The animated figures just mentioned were "cut-outs"—that is, they were flat profiles cut out and elaborately jointed. It took about eight hours to walk a figure across the screen, and one slip would ruin an entire shot.

By 1918 the separate-drawing system had started. Each movement was drawn on a separate sheet of paper and photographed in a fixed position on a board in front of the camera. This was the forerunner of the present-day system of animation.

A motor-driven camera was evolved, worked by pressing a button, so that animation apparatus was simple enough for the cartoonist to do the whole job single-handed. But it took eight weeks to make an 800-foot cartoon.

The silent cartoon was now well-established, with international figures like "Felix" and the "Krazy Kat."

The next revolution was the sound cartoon, invented by Walt Disney. This gave many new possibilities and also complications.

There are two possible methods, pre-synchronising and post-synchronising. Pre-synchronisation is most generally used.

In this method, the sound is recorded first, and usually a synchronised visual track made of a real person carrying out the actions needed from the script.

This film is then charted picture by picture, and the musical or other beats carefully noted.

Key-draughtsmen make the most important drawings—usually about one in six. The intervening drawings are done by "in-between" draughtsmen.

Girls trace the drawings in ink on to celluloid sheets. For the average cartoon film, the whole drawing and tracing process is repeated about 15,000 times.

Nowadays most cartoons are in colour, which means that the celluloid tracings have to be painted. The key-artist mixes the colours for a given scene, and girl colourists colour the tracings on the reverse side, to avoid blotting out the ink-outlines.

The shot is then photographed by a mechanical camera, the results are edited, and the cartoon is complete.

## My Friends of Yesterday
### *by Frank Tilley*

**Frank Tilley, editor of "Kinematograph Weekly" from 1918 to 1924, British film representative for American "Variety" from 1924 to 1928, founder editor of the official C.E.A. journal, "Cinematograph Times" from 1928 to 1930, Radio's general manager of publicity and advertising from 1930 to 1936, is now editor of "The London Reporter."**

The lamented death of Herman Fellner recalls the intriguing and exciting days of immediate post-war Continental films, especially the German and the Swedish. And as they come to me, these memories are jotted down.

Sometime in 1920, on "information received," mainly from Geneva, I deduced that an attempt was being made to form an American-German-Italian film pact. Carl Bratz, then head of the Deutsche Bank, was in it somewhere, and presently I heard that he was in London. Telephone calls produced no replies, and eventually I sent him a wire: "'Phone Gerrard 9870," or whatever was the then telephone number of the *Kinematograph Weekly*, which I was editing.

Soon after lunch came a knock on my door, and a large and worried-looking man entered, waving the telegram, and telling me he was Herr Fellner, and for what did I want him to see me?

A luncheon appointment with him and Bratz next day produced all the information I needed from short, frog-like, monocled Bratz, whose queerest characteristic was that he scarcely ever took his eyes from the ground. I discovered a psychological reason for this later, but that doesn't matter here.

Later in the year I again met Fellner in Berlin. He then had studios at Wannsee, and Joe May was making pictures for him. So boyishly enthusiastic they both were, so full of ideas, and so naïve about them. In Fellner's office in Tauntzienstrasse I saw them estimating the width of a proposed set by measuring round the wall of the office with May's cane, to a joint chant of "Eine stockelange, zwei stockelange" and so on, to the requisite ocular idea.

At that time I had just come from Stockholm, enticed there by the one or two Swedish pictures I had seen in London. The outcome was that, literally, I introduced Sjöstrom and Stiller to the English-speaking world, which incidentally led to the American "discovery" of Garbo.

Later, when on my persistent belief in and praise of Swedish pictures, Sjöstrom got his Culver City contract, I theorised on its artistic effect on his work. Of its financial benefit there was no doubt. Two or three years afterwards, when I had seen him in Hollywood at work, and had written him still later from London a reproachful letter or two, he replied with the cynical but understandable assertion that "one does not spit in one's soup."

Stiller's first visit to London—a treacherous memory suggests that it was in 1921—brought out all the Newfoundland puppy in him—and always he reminded me of nothing so much, especially when he was excitedly pleased. Outside the London Pavilion he grabbed the whole contents of a flower-seller's tray of violets and pressed them on my wife and a companion, as we were on our way to the Stoll Picture Theatre Club, a famous gathering in those days of film fans, who later were the only organised body to give Valentino a reception when he came from New York with me for his first visit to London. Garbo, at the time of Stiller's visit, was so unknown outside Scandinavia that Stiller came to the reception alone.

# COCKALORUM

## WHAT THE STARS SAY:

"A green salad a day is all I want. I never eat. Really I don't."

*Carole Lombard.*

"The man I am going to marry is about ten or fifteen years older than I am, and tremendously intellectual—that's what I want now. I want peace."

*Pola Negri.*

"Physically I am not equipped to mingle."

*Paul Muni.*

"Sometimes I wonder how I can stand myself."

*Clark Gable.*

"I have given away a hell of a lot of diamonds."

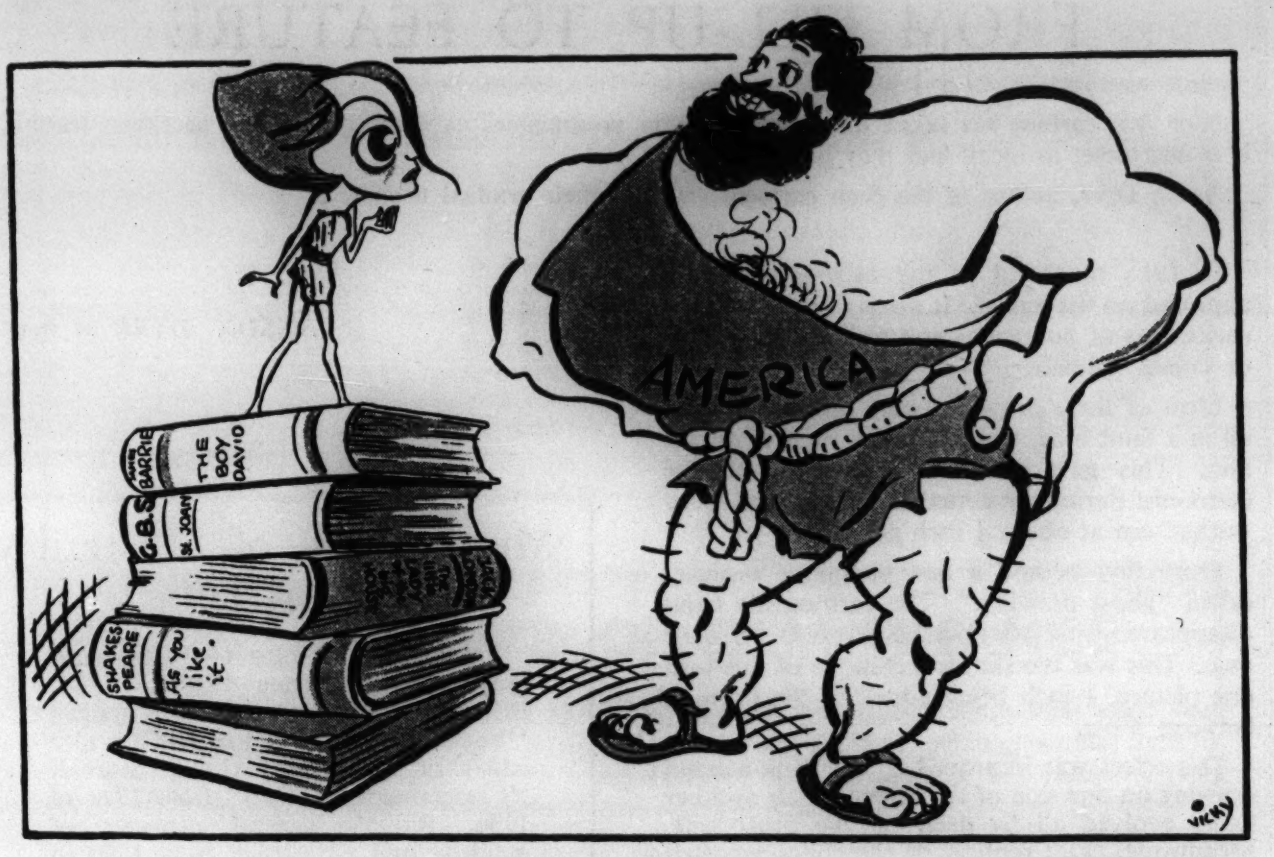
*John Barrymore.*

"I could make love just as convincingly to a pillow as to the charming ladies who have been my heroines."

*Warner Baxter.*

"Any language is easy if you know music."

*Luise Rainer.*

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**The Girl David**

**Secretary of Board of Film Censors and Chairman of Public Morality Council interview deputation of Film Stars on subject of subversive propaganda films**

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"I'm pretty fond of most American men I've met, and I'd like to meet a few Englishmen, Frenchmen, Spaniards, Germans, Italians and some others to sort of compare them."

*Mae West.*

"If you can take the actor out of motion pictures, pictures will be better."

*Frank Capra.*

"I'm an advocate of moderation. For example, I never drink before breakfast."

*W. C. Fields.*

"Like Greta Garbo, my first job was in a barber's shop."

*Jimmy Durante.*

**IDEAL HOMES EXHIBITION**

A baroque feature is a series of "Rooms of the Film Stars," who apparently order their furnishings *en bloc* from London firms. There are some surprises: Mr. Raymond Massey's dining-room strikes us as very vulgar, while Mr. Cecil B. de Mille's drawing-room is quiet and refined. The most beautiful room is Mr. Leslie Howard's kitchen. Miss Mae West's bedroom has a mirror on the ceiling over the bed.

*The New Statesman.*

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**CROSS EYES**

G. K. Spoor—the Ess of Essanay—tells one of Ben Turpin in his reminiscences. The scene is the old Essanay lot in Chicago.

Spoor watches Ben come from the studio, cross over to the cemetery which runs alongside carrying a bunch of the famous white lilies. He crosses the wall and makes his way carefully to one of the graves. He sets the lilies down as accurately as his cross eyes permit.

Spoor is affected. "That's a nice idea," he says to Ben, "I hope always when you have lilies left over from the set you will put them on one of these graves."

Ben is less affected. "You've got it wrong, Boss," he says, "that's where I got 'em."

Trade advertisement: "The Dionne Quintuplets. The Greatest since *The Birth of a Nation.*"

* * *

In America, M.G.M. releases a film as the *Perfect Gentleman*; in England the same picture is distributed as *The Imperfect Lady*.

* * *

Jack Oakie has it figured out that Baby LeRoy, last of the old Paramount guard, will get one of the dressing-rooms vacated by Mae West and Marlene Dietrich.

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# SIGHT AND SOUND

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